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THESIS

**RELIGIOUS ZIONISM AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT
POLICY**

by

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June 2014

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RELIGIOUS ZIONISM AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY

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ABSTRACT

Israel's 1967 victory in the Six-Day War ironically led to persistent and pervasive struggle. In addition to international scrutiny, regional uncertainty, and the management of an occupied Palestinian population, Israel has been engaged in an internal struggle revolving around settlement of the occupied territories. Religious Zionism constitutes one faction within this struggle. Religious Zionism is a middle-road ideology between secular Zionism, founded by Theodore Herzl in 1897, and the traditional rabbinic teaching that rejects human efforts to secure a return to the ancient land of Israel. Religious Zionism is founded on the belief that Jews have an obligation to return to Israel; such a return is considered a divine commandment. The occupation created the conditions for the religious Zionist movement to force a clash with the secular Israeli government. Religious Zionists wanted to possess and settle the newly occupied territory regardless of national security concerns. I argue that the small religious Zionist movement has had significant influence over the settlement policies of the Israeli government disproportional to its demographic numbers, an influence whose consequences extend to the fate of the peace process and the future of the Middle East.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	RELIGIOUS ZIONISM AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY	1
A.	MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	IMPORTANCE.....	2
C.	PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES	3
D.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
E.	METHODS AND SOURCES.....	8
F.	THESIS OVERVIEW	8
II.	MOVEMENTS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS ZIONISM	9
III.	ISRAEL’S SETTLEMENT OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: 1967–2014.....	17
A.	LABOR DOMINANCE: 1967–1977	19
B.	LIKUD DOMINANCE: 1977–1987	28
C.	FIRST INTIFADA: 1987–1993.....	31
D.	OSLO ACCORDS: 1993–2000	33
E.	SECOND INTIFADA: 2000–2005.....	37
F.	CURRENT PERIOD: 2005–2014.....	39
IV.	THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS ZIONISM ON SETTLEMENT OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES	43
A.	THE SETTLERS: INFLUENCE ON THE GROUND	43
B.	POLITICAL PARTIES AND MINISTRIES: INFLUENCE FROM WITHIN.....	51
C.	GUSH EMUNIM: BRIDGING THE GAP.....	55
V.	CONCLUSION	61
	LIST OF REFERENCES	65
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	69

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	The Allon Plan (from Jewish Virtual Library, 2014)	23
Figure 2.	The Dayan Plan (after Arieli, 2014)	25
Figure 3.	Settlement Population Growth Rate (from Mitnick, 2009)	33
Figure 4.	The Olmert Plan (from “Australians for Palestine,” 2008).....	40
Figure 5.	Location of Kiryat Arba (after “Facts on the Ground,” 2011).....	45
Figure 6.	Location of Kaddum (after “Facts on the Ground,” 2011)	47
Figure 7.	Location of Illegal Outposts (from “Facts on the Ground,” 2011)	50

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I. RELIGIOUS ZIONISM AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Israel's victory in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, or Six-Day War, was a seminal event that shocked Israel, its Arab neighbors, and the world. For 19 years, Israelis had feared being attacked by hostile neighboring countries that saw Israel's existence as an invasion of their land. With its unprecedented victory, a euphoric Israel found itself in control of a vastly increased amount of what was considered to be ancient Jewish biblical and ancestral land. Riding this wave of excitement and historical significance, both the Israeli government and elements of the civilian population rushed to claim and solidify their hold on the occupied territories. Justification for the occupation and settlement of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and Sinai Peninsula was assumed in several different ways to include military security, diplomatic bargaining power, cultural or secular nationalism, vengeance for recent defeats or to reestablish lost settlements, and religious commandment. Religious Zionists see the possession and settlement of the ancient lands of Israel as a biblical mandate, one that may supersede all others, and one that is fulfilled through the combined acts of God and man.¹

This study seeks to determine if Religious Zionism has had a substantial effect on Israel's settlement policies after the 1967 war. Unlike Islamic Extremism, the radical elements of Zionism are not commonly known. Israeli practices range from confiscating land to targeted assassinations. These actions have been committed by government organizations as well as non-government organizations and declared terrorist groups. Many in the west view Israel's extreme measures only as efforts to ensure its security and survival. Radical religious Zionists, however, have a different goal—the expulsion of non-Jews from the ancient land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*).² The first step in this process is the permanent occupation of the West Bank. Settlements have been used to justify both

1. Gadi Taub, *The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 39, 43–44.

2. Robert L. Friedman, *Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settlement Movement* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), xxx.

the security needs of the secular state and the goals of religious Zionism. Do the religious elements of Zionism have a substantial opportunity to influence official Israeli policy on settlement of the occupied territories? Does this have an impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process and a future state of Palestine?

B. IMPORTANCE

Zionism has existed for over a century, having been officially founded in 1897 by Theodor Herzl.³ Zionism was in part a reaction to growing anti-Semitism in Europe and other parts of the world.⁴ Until 1948, Zionism promoted the creation of a Jewish homeland in the ancient land of Israel.⁵ Zionist policies prior to 1948 included encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine, funding settlements there, and lobbying world powers to support the creation of a national Jewish homeland. The Zionist movement culminated in 1948 in the creation of the modern State of Israel, and since that time has continued to support Israel.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War resulted in the defeat of an Arab Coalition at the hands of Israel, and the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Golan Heights. With the exception of the Sinai and Gaza Strip, these territories remain occupied and Jewish settlements in these areas have been encouraged. Religious Zionism is a branch of Zionism which claims that the Jewish repossession of *Eretz Yisrael* is a mandate of God.⁶ Followers of Religious Zionism view the West Bank as an integral part of the State of Israel and resist its loss. As a result, Religious Zionism has far-reaching implications for the Arab-Israeli conflict and the future of any peace process. Religious Zionism may represent a minority of the Israeli population, but it contains a moral obligation for some that results in a disproportionately large impact on circumstances in the region. These impacts may be the result of official actions of such groups as Israel's National Religious Party, or they may be unofficial, such as the civil

3. Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 13.

4. Friedman, *Zealots*, xxviii.

5. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 202.

6. Friedman, *Zealots*, 4.

disobedience of small religious radicals, or they may be acts of terror such as the Tomb of the Patriarchs massacre.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

Religious Zionism and its influence on settlement policy is a complex and provocative topic. Several problems immediately present themselves. The first is the problem of terms and definitions. Zionism means different things to different people and is therefore difficult to define; there are many kinds of Zionism. Additionally, many terms are related to the subject of Zionism, including messianism, fundamentalism, various styles of Jewish Orthodoxy, religious radicalism, and religious extremism. All these terms are commonly used and, in some cases, interchangeable. The failure to clearly define these terms adds confusion to any discussions on these subjects.

The second problem is the subjective nature of motives. It is not feasible for those studying religious Zionism to discuss with the principle actors the motives for their actions, nor would the answers given necessarily reflect the truth. However, assumptions and inferences must be minimized and, when necessary, founded on credible observations. Arguably, a person's quoted words are the best indication of their motives. It will also be insightful to examine actions in light of personal relationships, group affiliations, and the sequences of events.

A third problem is related to the United States' relationship with Israel. Due to the financial, military, and international political support that the U.S. provides Israel, America is reluctant to admit Israel's government could be influenced by religion, sponsor violence, or that Israeli's commit acts of terrorism. For the U.S. to admit such would severely damage U.S./Israeli relations and U.S. credibility within the world community.

My hypothesis is that religious Zionism does have extensive influence on the settlement of the occupied territories. This influence is reflected in the policies and actions of the state and in the unofficial (sometimes illegal) actions of settlers themselves. The amount of influence exerted by religious Zionism, and the resilient nature of religious conviction, are foundational considerations for the future of the peace process.

Religious Zionism may be turn out to be the greatest single determinant of the future of Israel.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Israel is a contentious subject about which there are many varied opinions and perspectives. Those who support Israel often do so with strong conviction and devotion, while those who oppose it are no less determined in their opposition. Few are truly neutral or unbiased when it comes to Israel. After the World Wars and Cold War, it can be argued that issues related to the State of Israel dominated world affairs in the twentieth century. Despite Israel's prominence on the world stage, issues relating to Israel are not easily understood. Many different perspectives can be used from which to view Israel. The Zionist movement is even less understood. When studying Zionism, perhaps the most revealing shift in perspective is the contrast between the Western view and the non-Western view. Gadi Taub describes this in the introduction to his book, *The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism*. Taub says that the foundational difference on Zionism is Western or non-Western, and the variances grow from there.⁷ In evaluating sources on Zionist history, involvement in politics, and connections to conflict or violence, acknowledging this foundational difference is not only enlightening, but also critical to understanding the subject.

Many scholars of Zionism take a historical approach, describing the founding of Zionism, its early leaders and their motivations, along with major historical events effecting Zionism such as the 1948 War of Independence and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Robert Friedman, Arthur Hertzberg, Walter Laqueur, and Gideon Shimoni have published historical accounts of the Zionist movement. Friedman focuses on the non-Western perspective championed by religious leaders like Rabbis Zvi Yehuda Kook, Moshe Levinger, Meir Kahane.⁸ Shimoni highlights the Western influences in Zionism. Arthur Hertzberg's "The Zionist Idea," is a compilation of works from many early Zionist leaders. Hertzberg introduces the works of each of these leaders with a short

7. Taub, *The Settlers*, 1–3.

8. Friedman, *Zealots*, 3, 12, 48.

biographical summary, making it easier to understand their motives and goals for Zionism. For these historical approaches, the Western perspective tends to emphasize anti-Semitism, Jewish nationalism, and the resulting desire for a state with a Jewish majority. The non-Western perspective, by contrast, stresses Jewish culture, a desire to combat assimilation, and especially the religious claims that Jews have to the ancient land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*).⁹

Another common approach to the study of Zionism takes a political perspective. Zionism has been championed by most politicians in Israel, but what Zionism means to each party is quite different. Scholars such as Charles Liebman, Colin Shindler, Asher Cohen, and Bernard Susser have addressed the religious and political intermingling in Zionism. In this case, a Western interpretation of Zionism would accentuate Western-style politics and values; i.e., democracy, capitalism, human rights, and a separation of government and religion. In short, Zionism concerns the creation and security of a state where ethnic Jews are the majority. The non-Western view is very different, freely intermixing government and religion. Examples of this are the common presence of religious symbolism in government, state institutions like the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and religious state laws concerning the Sabbath.¹⁰ A more extreme view of religious Zionism holds that the occupation of Greater Israel and the imposition of Torah law is a mandate from God that will usher in “the Messianic Age.”¹¹ This non-Western view of religion and state is a striking reflection of Islamic groups who strive for Muslim states ruled by Sharia law.

A third approach to Zionism is to view it in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is the most common approach, emphasizing the conflict itself with Zionism as a sub-theme, or vice versa. Much has been written on Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict, with Benny Morris’ *Righteous Victims* and Martin Sicker’s *Between Hashemites and Zionists* being examples of this perspective. Within this context, a Western view of

9. Friedman, *Zealots*, xxxiv.

10. Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Religion and Politics in Israel*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 15–24.

11. Friedman, *Zealots*, 4, 12.

Zionism emphasizes Israel's right to exist as a nation. It highlights historical Jewish suffering and correlates modern conflict with Palestinians and Arab neighbors to anti-Semitism. Israel is often depicted as the victim of violent attacks, and must safeguard itself through violence in turn. In contrast, the non-Western view of Zionism and the Arab-Israeli conflict associates Israel with Imperialism or Western colonialism. From this perspective, Israel is a conquering alien force bent on driving out or dominating native Arab Palestinians. Palestinians, and to a lesser extent neighboring countries, are in this view the victims of Zionist aggression. This is exacerbated by continued Israeli occupation and violent suppression of Palestinian rights; actions committed with impunity while the rest of the world (especially the West) stands by and watches.

A fourth view of the Zionist movement as it relates to politics and the settlements focuses on the conflict within Israel over the meaning of Zionism, the nature of the state, and the way forward. This is perhaps the most overlooked perspective on Zionism, but arguably the most important. It is also fascinating. This conflict cuts to the heart of the people. What does it mean to be Israeli?¹² That simple question comes close to defining this aspect of the conflict, but misses the mark slightly. The conflict, however, is over the identity of the people. Are the people Israeli or Jewish? Are they a nation or a culture; an ethnicity or members of a religion? The immediate answer is that they can be all of these things at once. Nevertheless, possibly the greatest conflict in Zionism is over these questions. A Western perspective will emphasize secular nationalism and a Jewish majority in the State of Israel, without specifying what defines Jewishness. A non-Western perspective finds the culture and religion to be the critical issue. Here is where the root problem is exposed. Secular Zionists view the occupied territories as security issues, but would and have tried to trade land for peace.¹³ Religious Zionists, including portions of such groups as modern orthodox, fundamentalist, Messianist, and Jewish radicals, would stop at nothing to claim the whole of Greater Israel.¹⁴ Possession of the

12. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), title page.

13. Friedman, *Zealots*, xxv.

14. Friedman, *Zealots*, xxxvi.

land is tied to their deepest convictions. These extremists use various tactics—to include violence—against those who oppose them, be they Palestinians, neighboring states, or even other Israelis. A sample of works on this internal Zionist conflict include *The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism*, by Gadi Taub, *For the Land and the Lord*, by Ian S. Lustick, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*, by Judith Butler, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, by Aviezer Ravitzky, and *Brother Against Brother*, by Ehud Sprinzak. To what extent is this radical minority powerful enough to influence settlement policy, sabotage peace processes, or even threaten civil war? From this perspective, Israel's greatest enemy is within.

The last perspective that shall be addressed is an altogether different point of view. In the previous paragraphs, Zionism was studied from historical and political perspectives, as well as in conflict both inside and outside the state. Any study of religious Zionism and its effects on Israeli settlements and conflict in the occupied territories should also consider the Palestinian perspective. Do Palestinians see the occupation as the result of official Israeli policies, or radical groups of settlers? How much of the violence suffered by Palestinians is at the hands of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) vice the settlers themselves? If Israeli state policies and actors are the main perpetrators, can the origin of these policies and actions be found in elements of religious Zionism within the Israeli government? Don Peretz' *The West Bank: History, Politics, Society, and Economy*, and *The Palestinian National Movement: Politics of Contention, 1967–2005*, by Amal Jamal, are representative of this literature.

Much has been written about the Arab-Israeli conflict, Zionism, and the settlement of the occupied territories. There are many way of looking at these subjects, as has been discussed. However, specific studies on the influence of religious Zionism in Israel's settlement policies are lacking. This is an important topic of study because if religion has infiltrated the higher levels of government in Israel, or is otherwise able to manipulate government decisions, then the way the world looks at Israel and its settlements will be fundamentally changed.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This investigation of religious Zionism and its influence on settlement policy will be historical. I will examine what has been written on Zionist history, specifically the radical religious elements, and their rise to prominence. Because these elements have dynamic histories, I will follow key groups and individuals as non-government organizations become political parties and vice versa. I will distinguish between religious groups that choose to influence policy through political participation, personal influence, civil disobedience, and acts of violence.

In a parallel analysis, I will evaluate Israel's settlement policies by looking the authors of the policy and its purpose. The originators of settlement policy will be assessed for affiliation with religious Zionism. The goals of the settlement policy will also be evaluated along the lines of security verses religious, cultural, or other reasons. Finally, settlement policy will be judged by its effects, i.e., did the policy improve security in the area, or further the goals of religious radicalism?

Source material for religious Zionism and the growth of the settlements will come from scholarly books on the subjects. Israeli settlement policies and information concerning them will be collected from government websites and news articles, as well as the previously mentioned books.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

In order to study religious Zionism, it is first necessary to compile a working list of terms and definitions. Zionism and its various subsets, along with related terms, will be defined for the purposes of this study. Chapter three will examine policies directly related to the settlement of the occupied territories; authors and origins of these policies will be evaluated for religious influences. Chapter four will be devoted to examples of cases where religious Zionists had the opportunity to influence or determine government action with regard to settlement. In conclusion, the extent of religious influence in settlement policy should be evident. The implications of religious influence in the government of Israel would be a possible suggestion for future study.

II. MOVEMENTS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Contrary to common thought, there remains persistent difficulty in defining Zionism. The word itself seems to have a supernatural quality which creates conceptions or reveals preconceptions that defy explanation. These ideas are not always positive or negative, but do tend to be polarizing. Although scholars and academics profess neutrality and a lack of bias or prejudice, in the case of Zionism it may be that only the ignorant and uneducated can be truly neutral.

I confess my own prejudice. Growing up in a religious family in the “Bible Belt” of the southern United States, many of my heroes were ancient Israelites whose stories were found in the Old and New Testaments of the Christian scriptures. In addition to these educational and inspiring stories, there are specific verses that, for some like me, demand devotion to Zion. In Genesis chapters 12 and 27, this concept is repeated: “All who curse you [Israel] will be cursed, and all who bless you will be blessed.”¹⁵ However, as is typical of the divisive nature of this subject, not all Christians support Israel or the Jews. Many Christians are on the opposite end of the spectrum, and hold the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus. They would cite a different concept to justify their beliefs, one embodied by another verse: “For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!”¹⁶ This verse, spoken about a man, is for some now applied to a people. And both of these extremes exist within the Christian Church. Outside of Christianity, some have supported Zionism to compensate for the past sufferings of the Jewish people; anti-Semitism has a long history even before the Holocaust of World War II. Some supported Zionism because of anti-Semitic feelings, not being able to imagine a better solution to the “Jewish problem” than to encourage immigration to another nation. From another perspective, many have opposed Zionism as another Western invasion which dispossesses a native population and violates the inalienable human rights that the West is supposed to champion. Despite these vastly

15. Gen. 27:29 (New Living Translation).

16. Mat. 26:24 (New Living Translation).

differing perspectives, predispositions, and biases, or because of them, the task of defining terms relating to Zionism is critical for anyone undertaking a study of the subject.

Zionism is for many people nothing more than support for the Jewish people through various means, including verbal, financial, or political. But where does the term come from? The oldest known reference to Zion is from 2 Samuel 5:7, which says that “David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.”¹⁷ This is a synonym for Jerusalem, as is demonstrated best by Psalm 147:12: “Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!”¹⁸ Therefore, Zion most literally refers to Jerusalem, but has also been used to refer to the Temple Mount specifically, or the whole land of Israel generally. It is this later general use of Zion which was evoked in the late nineteenth century when Nathan Birnbaum coined the term Zionism.¹⁹ The creation of the Zionist movement, however, is most commonly attributed to Theodore Herzl. Herzl wrote his famous *Jewish State* in 1896, and in 1897 he founded the Zionist Organization and chaired the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.²⁰ Aviezer Ravitzky, in his seminal work on the subject, describes Zionism as “a modernist Jewish movement” and “a secular human initiative [which] wished to bring about the return to Zion and the ingathering of the exiles... to render the “Eternal People” a historical people, temporally and spatially bound; to transform the “Chosen People” into a “normal people,” like other nations.”²¹ Gadi Taub describes it as the “application of the universal principle of self-determination to the Jews.”²² Taub quotes Israel’s Declaration of Independence which refers to a Jewish right to have their own state “like all other nations.”²³ Zionism was not against Judaism or religion in general, but was strictly non-religious. It was a secular and

17. 2 Sam. 5:7 (New Living Translation).

18. Ps. 147:12 (New Living Translation).

19. Nicholas De Lange, *An Introduction to Judaism* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30.

20. Hertzberg, *Zionist Idea*, 64.

21. Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 10.

22. Taub, *The Settlers*, 23.

23. Ibid.

political movement with the goal to establish a Jewish democratic state. Robert Friedman describes it in this way: “more than a reaction to anti-Semitism, Zionism was a Jewish national liberation movement that adhered to the principles of nineteenth century liberalism and democracy.”²⁴ Since the term Zionism, used without a qualifying adjective, is generally understood to mean political or secular Zionism, for the purposes of this study, and for simplicity, all three will be synonymous.

Anti-Zionism was the reaction against Zionism. It is still present today, but had a greater following in the period from the 1890’s until the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, and some influence up until the 1967 Six-Day War. Anti-Zionism is based in the Jewish religious community (primarily the traditional passivity supported by ultra-Orthodoxy²⁵), but is distinctly different than religious Zionism, which will be explained later. Anti-Zionism is rooted in the set of historical Jewish beliefs which developed after the last Jewish revolt against the Romans in 136 CE. Jewish losses were very heavy in these “Messianic” wars with Rome; the Temple had been lost a second time, and the nation of Israel itself ceased to exist. Thereafter, Jewish rabbis began to teach that it was wrong to “hasten the End by human effort.”²⁶ Ravitzky explains that the Jewish Talmud and the lauded rabbis of history blame man’s misguided efforts to reveal the Messiah or “hasten the End” for the suffering of the past.²⁷ The argument of anti-Zionism was that true Jewish faith required passivity from the Jews and redemption from the Messiah alone.²⁸ Zionism (which was spear-headed by non-religious Jews to begin with) was attempting to force a return through human efforts.²⁹ Contrary to Zionism’s self-proclaimed non-religious stance, anti-Zionist saw Zionism as a direct attack on Judaism itself and a blatant violation of the long-held prohibition on a “return to Palestine by force” and “forcing the end.”³⁰ In short, anti-Zionism was championed by the traditional

24. Friedman, *Zealots*, xxviii.

25. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 42.

26. *Ibid.*, 11.

27. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

28. *Ibid.*, 11.

29. *Ibid.*, 15.

30. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

rabbis who wanted to maintain Jewish passivity and prevent a return to Palestine through human efforts.

Like anti-Zionism, religious Zionism was led by rabbis in the Jewish community. However, unlike anti-Zionism, religious Zionism supported a return to Palestine through human effort and saw ultimate redemption as the joint enterprise of God and man.³¹ Thus, religious Zionism became a middle road—a compromise or fusion—of political Zionism and anti-Zionism.³² It was a way for some religious Jews to support and promote the secular Zionism which was condemned by anti-Zionism and the traditional teachings of ultra-Orthodoxy. It was also a justification for religious Jews to move to Palestine (later Israel), whether motivated by persecution and anti-Semitism or by a desire to live in the ancestral “Promised Land.”

Religious Zionism was most notably articulated by Rabbi Abraham Kook (1865-1935).³³ He was one of the first to defend political Zionism from the ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists.³⁴ Kook did this by claiming that the hand of God was moving the world, and specifically the Zionists of his day, “toward their redemption,” though without their knowledge.³⁵ Ravitzky quotes Kook as saying, “They themselves [meaning secular Zionists] do not realize what they want. The divine spirit informs their strivings in spite of them.”³⁶ This concept is supported by verses such as Proverbs 21:1, which says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”³⁷ Kook used this concept to justify, in a sense, the amoral or slightly immoral actions of secular or sinful people. In this way, Kook excused “those who desecrate the

31. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 30.

32. Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity: The Secular-Religious Impasse* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 4.

33. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 86; and Ian S. Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1988), 29.

34. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 87.

35. *Ibid.*, 104, 112.

36. *Ibid.*, 112. Brackets inserted by author for clarification.

37. Prov. 21:1 (New King James Version); the concept of God directing the actions of those who do not believe or follow Him is common in scripture, including: Prov. 16:9; Ex. 9:12; and Isa. 41:2 (according to most biblical scholars, Isaiah 41:2 refers to Cyrus of Persia).

Sabbath and eat forbidden food” without giving a “stamp of approval for sin or rebellion.”³⁸ The actions of political Zionists who do not observe the Torah or practice Judaism can be excused because God is using them to bring the Jews back from exile. Kook believed that a physical return would lead to a spiritual return to the Jewish faith.³⁹ In summary, he excused or justified political Zionism while personally teaching and observing individual holiness. However, one statement made by Abraham Kook to support this justification of sin would later be taken to an extreme which Kook never intended. Kook said, “There are times when laws of the Torah must be overridden, but there is no one to show the legitimate way, and so the aim is accomplished by a bursting of bounds...When prophecy is blocked, rectification is achieved by a sustained breach, outwardly lamentable but inwardly a source of joy!”⁴⁰ Abraham Kook excused the non-religious without condoning sinful acts committed by the religious.

Upon the death of Abraham Kook in 1935, his son, Zvi Yehudah Kook, became the spokesperson for religious Zionism. Zvi Kook (1891-1982) took his father’s teachings to a logical but extreme conclusion. Israel is holy independent from its actions.⁴¹ Political and religious Zionism are both moved by the hand of God to conquer and settle the land. Personal holiness will come later, after the land is conquered and settled. In fact, the command to conquer and settle the land was elevated by Zvi Kook “from the status of mitzvah after the fashion of Nahmanides, to the status of *the* mitzvah.”⁴² The command itself is found in the book of Numbers 33:53, which reads: “Take possession of the land and settle in it, because I have given it to you to occupy.”⁴³ Settlement of the land now became the principal thing, under which everything else should be subjected. Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, a student of Zvi Kook’s, claimed that settlement of the land was “equal in weight to all the other commandments of the Bible taken together...the basis for all commandments in the Bible,” without which “all the commandments of the Bible lose

38. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 114, 102.

39. Ibid., 113.

40. Rabbi Abraham Kook, quoted in Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 105.

41. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 136.

42. Taub, *The Settlers*, 45.

43. Num. 33:53 (New Living Translation).

their meaning.”⁴⁴ Thus, Zvi Kook was able to support a more militant view than his father. Zvi Kook and his followers broadened the elder Kook’s statement, “there are times when laws of the Torah must be overridden,” and now used this to excuse radical, sinful, or even terrorist actions committed by religious people.⁴⁵ The end now justified the means. Furthermore, because of the primacy of this commandment, the government of Israel was to be considered legitimate only when they support the possession and settlement of the land.⁴⁶ Zvi Kook taught that “the conquest and settlement of the land...is dictated by divine politics, and no earthly politics can supersede it.”⁴⁷ Religious radicalism and acts of violence and terror were now excused because of zeal for the land. This line of thinking would eventually lead to atrocities such as the Goldstein massacre, Rabin’s assassination, and the plot to destroy Dome of the Rock, among many others.

There are many other terms which are commonly used when referring to religious Zionism, or any religious movement. These terms include, but are not limited to such things as fundamentalism, radicalism, and extremism. Terms such as these vary in their meaning from person to person. Though our first impulse would lead us to assume that we understand these terms in the way an author intended, confusion or misinterpretation often result. For example, Ian Lustick, in his book “For the Land and the Lord,” describes as Jewish fundamentalism what Aviezer Ravitzky and others refer to as religious Zionism. Both authors have studied the same movements, but refer to them with different names. The term religious Zionism is favored by most scholars on this subject. For the purposes of this study, fundamentalism will be “used in strictly religious terms, referring to undeviating belief in a precisely rendered catechism or a religious tradition dedicated to the literal interpretation of scriptures.”⁴⁸ Radicalism and extremism will be understood as synonymous, and used in reference to those people or actions which exist outside of the mainstream or majority of any group or movement. Neither fundamentalism nor

44. Taub, *The Settlers*, 74.

45. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 115.

46. Ibid., 139.

47. Ibid., 131.

48. Lustick, *For the Land*, 5.

radicalism or extremism is used in this thesis to imply violence, though the latter two may have a greater propensity toward violent actions.

Having defined the major movements and terms surrounding Zionism, I will now proceed to a discussion of Israel's settlement policies since the 1967 Six-Day War.

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III. ISRAEL'S SETTLEMENT OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: 1967–2014

This chapter will deal with the establishment and growth of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied after the Six-Day War of June 5–10, 1967. No official government policy on this exists—Israel has avoided adopting official settlement policies. Two factors contributed to the reluctance on the part of the Israeli government to establish official policy for settlements.

First, the Zionist movement and Jewish immigration to and settlement in Palestine had at least a seventy year history by 1967. The 1948 birth of the State of Israel, although a victory in many ways, was seen by some Zionists as an obstacle to the settlement of Greater Israel, also called the Whole Land of Israel, which included the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁴⁹ For nineteen years, from 1948 to 1967, significant members of the population continued to promote settlement of the Jordanian West Bank and Egyptian Gaza Strip. Jordan, in fact, had annexed the West Bank on April 24th, 1950. The almost constant threat of invasion by Arab neighbors made Israel painfully aware of the security vulnerabilities created by the 1949 armistice lines.⁵⁰ Therefore, within days of the 1967 Israeli victory over Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, plans for settlements were already being carried out with guarded support from both the highest and lowest levels of the Israeli government and population. This demonstrated the deep desire to settle and govern the newly acquired (or reacquired) Occupied Territories.

Despite Israel's desire to settle the Occupied Territories, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 made settlement in these territories illegal. This serves as the second factor which contributed to the reluctance of Israel's government to establish official policy either for or against settlements. This situation created widespread tension throughout the Israeli government, military, and civilian population. On one hand, elements within all three of these groups felt a strong desire to settle the newly conquered

49. Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977* (New York: Times Books, 2006), 86.

50. Ibid., 49.

territories. For religious Zionists, most of these lands held ancient biblical significance for the Jewish people. For secular Zionists, these lands provided increased security and bargaining power for peace negotiations. On the other hand, there was no legal way for Israel to “transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territories it occupied.”⁵¹ Israel found it more convenient to promote settlement quietly under the thin disguise of military outposts while officially remaining undecided on the settlement issue. In a January 1968 meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, in response to general questions concerning the future of Israeli settlements, Prime Minister Eshkol reportedly responded, “My government has decided not to decide.”⁵² This became characteristic of the Israeli government’s methods of settlement, and makes finding official Israeli policy difficult or impossible.

Israeli settlement of the Occupied Territories covers a span of time starting with the Six-Day War on June 5, 1967, and continuing to the present. These 47 years can be divided into more manageable periods using general characteristics of these periods. Scholars disagree on how to best divide these years of settlement. I have chosen a commonly accepted and readily identifiable division of the 47 year settlement period. The first period corresponds to the leadership of the Labor party from 1967 to 1977. The second period corresponds to Likud control in government from 1977 to 1987. The First Intifada characterizes the years 1987 to 1993. The Oslo Accords cover 1993 to 2000. The Second Intifada dominates 2000 to 2005, and the final settlement period continues to the present. While these broad categories do not correspond exactly to the changes in Israel’s administration, I will nevertheless subdivide the 47 years of settlement and occupation by Prime Minister.

An in-depth discussion of Prime Minister Eshkol’s actions, as well as the Allon and Dayan Plans, will serve as a basis for comparison of subsequent leadership and settlement plans. These three men, in less than two years after the Six-Day War, had set the precedent for the following years of occupation.

51. “Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,” Geneva, August 12, 1949, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5>.

52. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 127.

A. LABOR DOMINANCE: 1967–1977

Levi Eshkol served as Israel's Prime Minister from June 26, 1963, until his death on February 26, 1969. Prior to that time, Eshkol had served as Israel's Minister of Agriculture and Finance Minister, and before statehood, as Settlement Department chief. Eshkol was known as an indecisive man who was fearful of being tied to a decision. Gershom Gorenberg talks about "a reluctant Eshkol pushed by Orthodox settlers," adding "his divided government was incapable of choosing [the Allon Plan] or any other policy."⁵³ However, Gorenberg argues that Eshkol had an openness that sometimes grew into uncertainty, but "his willingness to weigh every idea projected pragmatism and compromise."⁵⁴ Eshkol and others like him saw a value in public indecision. They would begin to "turn ambiguity into national policy,"⁵⁵ a trend that is still alive today. For those that worked closely with him, Eshkol was a deeply committed, strong supporter of settlement within the territories occupied after 1967, as will become evident in the following paragraphs covering settlement project in all major regions of the Occupied Territories.⁵⁶

Eshkol's strongest feelings regarding annexation and/or settlement were focused on Jerusalem. Many government officials feared international pressure (mostly from the U.S.) would soon demand that Israel relinquish all occupied territories. In a June 11 cabinet meeting, just a day after the war, Eshkol expressed the desire to reunite Jerusalem in such a way that would justify Israel's permanent possession of the entire city. He wanted this to happen as quickly as possible, "before anyone said not to."⁵⁷ On that same morning, bulldozers pushed down the walls which separated East and West Jerusalem.⁵⁸ Eshkol was not alone in his sentiment; many in government, the military, and civilian population felt very strongly about not only Jerusalem, but the entire Occupied Territory.

53. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 118.

54. *Ibid.*, 182–83.

55. *Ibid.*, 75.

56. *Ibid.*, 110, 113, 125.

57. *Ibid.*, 46.

58. *Ibid.*, 45.

In a July opinion poll, “91 percent of Israelis favored permanently keeping East Jerusalem, 85 percent were for keeping the Syrian heights, and 71 percent wanted to keep the West Bank.”⁵⁹ By late June, the cabinet had agreed upon a way to unite the city without officially annexing it. Amendments to two laws would allow the interior minister to extend the city limits and the cabinet to extend Israeli law to match the new limits.⁶⁰ In a semantic dodge, this was described as “municipal fusion” instead of annexation, but it nevertheless tripled the size of Israeli Jerusalem.⁶¹ In early July, Eshkol personally initiated and directed the “building of Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem as quickly as possible,” saying that “Israeli control in Jerusalem depended on Jewish settlements.”⁶²

Early after the war, by June 19, Israel was ready to offer the first “land for peace” deal. This proposal was made to Egypt and Syria, and offered the Sinai, Gaza, and the Golan Heights in exchange for international recognition and lasting peace.⁶³ Jordan and the West Bank were conspicuously left out of the deal; Israel had other plans for the West Bank.

Concerning the Etzion Bloc south of Bethlehem, a trip to the site was undertaken on June 13 by some who were committed to resettling the area.⁶⁴ The Etzion Bloc was the site of four *kipputzim*, or farming communities, that after a long and intense fight were destroyed the day before Israeli Independence in May, 1948. Sentiment for the Etzion Bloc was strong for many in Israel. Theodor Meron provided the government with legal counsel stating that settlement in the Occupied Territories was illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention, but concerning the Etzion Bloc specifically, he said it could be argued that the people were “returning to their homes.”⁶⁵ By September 24, 1967, Eshkol had made a decision. He announced to the cabinet that an outpost, or *Nahal*

59. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 63.

60. *Ibid.*, 58.

61. *Ibid.*, 59.

62. *Ibid.*, 63.

63. *Ibid.*, 52–53.

64. *Ibid.*, 69.

65. *Ibid.*, 102.

paramilitary post, would be established at the Etzion Bloc within two weeks. It would be labeled a military base and thus exploit the loophole in Meron's legal advice.⁶⁶ However, the settlers would always insist upon their civilian status.

Settlement plans were also underway in the Golan Heights at an early date. On June 14, an aspiring settlement leader met with the chief of staff of the army's Northern Command to discuss the possibility of settling the Heights.⁶⁷ During the Six-Day War, the Golan Heights had been used with devastating effect as a launch point for Syrian artillery shells. Initially, the army and Settlement Department would support the settlements in the Heights without the knowledge of the Prime Minister or cabinet. It was not until late August that the cabinet would approve civilian workers already occupying the Golan Heights, and on September 1, the cabinet approved the ambiguous statement that the settlers "could remain in the heights."⁶⁸ These settlers were on the payroll of Yigal Allon's Labor Ministry, which described them as previously unemployed, in order to provide government financial support.⁶⁹

In an August 27 cabinet meeting, approval was also given to open a settlement at an experimental agricultural station called Al-Arish in the Sinai.⁷⁰ Only days later, Eshkol was on tour of the northern Sinai and responded to the September 1 Khartoum rejection of Israel's land for peace proposal by saying, "If Khartoum is the declared position, then our answer is, 'We stay here.'"⁷¹ In the course of time, other settlements were added to Al-Arish, including Sharm al-Sheikh guarding the Strait of Tiran, and several settlements like Yamit intended to separate the Gaza Strip from the Sinai Peninsula.⁷²

66. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 113–14.

67. *Ibid.*, 70.

68. *Ibid.*, 97–98.

69. *Ibid.*, 122.

70. *Ibid.*, 97.

71. *Ibid.*, 110.

72. *Ibid.*, 167.

The Jordan River Valley was also a strategically important area. It was mostly uninhabited and provided little arable land, but served as a natural deterrent against future Jordanian aggression. Under Eshkol's leadership, three outposts were established in the Jordan Rift.

Although the Eshkol administration is often characterized as indecisive, or crippled with second-guessing itself, this trait began to serve a purpose and eventually became intentional. As the previous examples have shown, in less than a year and a half after the Six-Day War, the Eshkol administration was aggressively pursuing settlement in Jerusalem, the Golan, the Sinai, and the Jordan Rift in a way that avoided too much international criticism. It was also during this period that two major plans were introduced which would have long lasting implications: the Allon and Dayan Plans.

Before the Six-Day War, Yigal Allon had been involved with the Whole Land of Israel movement and dreamed of the day when Israel would annex the West Bank.⁷³ However, even before the fighting stopped in June of 1967, Allon, now Israel's Finance Minister, knew that his dream of annexing the land that Israel now controlled would not soon come to pass. The reason: the Palestinian people were not leaving their homes like they had in 1948.⁷⁴ Allon instinctively knew that to annex the conquered territory meant granting the Arab population Israeli citizenship, which would then threaten the Jewish majority in Israel. On the other hand, Israel could not long rule over the Arab population without providing just government and human rights.⁷⁵ His solution came quickly. As early as July 3, 1967, Allon was proposing to the cabinet that temporary work camps be established in the Golan Heights, which he was convinced should be annexed for security/tactical reasons.⁷⁶ Allon also proposed annexing and settling the Rafiah Plain in northern Sinai in order to create a buffer between Gaza and Egypt (Allon did not expect to keep the Sinai).⁷⁷ But the real heart of the Allon Plan, first proposed to the cabinet in

73. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 40.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 49.

76. Ibid., 75.

77. Ibid., 167.

late July, was to annex and settle the west side of the Jordan River and Dead Sea (see Figure 1⁷⁸). These areas were sparsely populated and undeveloped, but would provide Israel a much more secure border with Jordan. The heavily populated Arab areas in the hill country, Allon said, should be given autonomy or returned to Jordanian rule.⁷⁹ Controlled corridors would connect the Arab West Bank population centers in the north and south with Jordan in the east. However, military security for the entire Arab West Bank would fall under Israeli jurisdiction.⁸⁰ One essential idea for Allon was to quickly settle the annexed areas: “We have never held territory,” Allon argued, “without settling it.”⁸¹ For many reasons, likely to include plausible deniability, the Allon Plan was never officially adopted. Unofficially, the Allon Plan guided settlement of the Occupied Territories under Eshkol and many Prime Ministers after him.⁸²



Figure 1. The Allon Plan (from Jewish Virtual Library, 2014)

78. “The Allon Plan,” Jewish Virtual Library, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/History/allonplan.html>.

79. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 81.

80. *Ibid.*, 80–81, 152.

81. *Ibid.*, 51.

82. *Ibid.*, 124, 179.

Yigal Allon's biggest political opponent was Moshe Dayan, the Defense Minister. On the day after the war, Dayan voiced his opinion over U.S. television that Israel should keep the Gaza Strip and West Bank.⁸³ Dayan proposed his own plan on the best options for the newly acquired lands which, characteristic of the Allon/Dayan competition, was in many ways the "photo negative" of the Allon Plan.⁸⁴ Under the Dayan plan, Israel should establish defensible positions along the Arab populated mountain ridge, close to the Arab cities, not in the sparsely populated Jordan Valley. Five army bases, and corresponding Jewish civilian settlements, connected by a network of roads would divide the West Bank and prevent the Arab population from demanding independence⁸⁵ (see Figure 2⁸⁶). Israel should also enmesh the economies of the Arab and Jewish populations to further discourage future independence.⁸⁷ Another difference between Allon and Dayan's plans was that while Allon focused on agricultural settlement, Dayan promoted urban settlement.⁸⁸ In this, Dayan had an advantage. The Israeli youth were losing the desire to live in rural farming communities and work the land. Agricultural settlements were already suffering from a scarcity of new settlers. The Allon and Dayan Plans did share three similarities. Like Allon, Dayan believed that the enmeshed Arab population of the West Bank should be given limited autonomy or retain Jordanian citizenship while Israel provided security.⁸⁹ Secondly, like the Allon Plan, the Dayan Plan was never officially adopted. And finally, like the Allon Plan, the Dayan Plan was used unofficially as a guide for settlement activities from 1967 until today.⁹⁰

83. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 50.

84. Ibid., 82.

85. Ibid.

86. Shaul Arieli, "The five fists-Dayan plan - the mountain ridge plan, 1968," ShaulArieli.com, accessed May 16, 2014, http://www.shaularieli.com/image/users/77951/ftp/my_files/maps_in_english/Policy%20Programs/Map_13-The-five-fists--Dayan-plan---the-mountain-ridge-plan_-1968.gif?id=10168453.

87. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 172–73.

88. Ibid., 172.

89. Ibid., 51, 82.

90. Ibid., 175.



Figure 2. The Dayan Plan (after Arieli, 2014)

The activities of Prime Minister Eshkol and the importance of the Allon and Dayan Plans are just a sampling of early settlement activity, but serve to show that settlement was not something that this administration was dragged into. The indecision and ambiguity that characterized national policy often served to disguise what was going on behind the scenes. Concerning an officially adopted policy for or against settlement of the Occupied Territories, there was none. Settlement of these territories was nonetheless off to a strong start. Gorenberg describes it this way, “Small decisions, made bit by bit, with authority stretched beyond its intent, were adding up to a new policy, neither articulated nor admitted.”⁹¹ By February 26, 1969, at Eshkol’s death, only a year and eight months after the Six-Day War, “there were ten settlements in the Golan, three in the Jordan Rift, along with Kfar Etzion and the Hebron settlement south of Jerusalem, and plans to settle in the Rafiah area.”⁹² In one of the last acts of the Eshkol administration, the alignment of the Labor Party in January 1969 “completed the process of creating a

91. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 98.

92. *Ibid.*, 182.

ruling party that stood for every possible policy and no policy on the country's most fateful issue, the future of the territories."⁹³

Golda Meir took over in 1969, perhaps because she was the least divisive leader of the newly-aligned Labor Party. Israel and the Labor Party held a position of strength, and two of Prime Minister Meir's primary jobs were to maintain the strength of both. This led to compromise within the party and a lack of compromising with Arab neighbors. Early on in her administration, settlement activity was publicly justified for security purposes, but it was also used to force Egypt, Syria, and Jordan to talk directly with Israel about a peace agreement.⁹⁴ Settlement was encouraged and expanded in the Golan Heights, Hebron, the Gaza Strip, and Rafiah Plain of northeast Sinai, along with Sharm al-Sheikh near the Strait of Tiran.⁹⁵ However, settlement near Nablus, as well as proposals to allow private Jewish citizens and companies to buy property from Arabs in the Occupied Territories, were repeatedly rebuffed.⁹⁶ Despite the significant settlement activity that was approved, these actions were not enough for the right-wing elements. Gorenberg describes the period in this way: "The ethos of putting more Jews on the land was accepted truth. When the government approved new settlement locations in occupied territory, the movements [The United Kibbutz and various organizations of moshavim, or cooperative farm villages] pushed and shoved to get them."⁹⁷ Israel's victory in 1967, as well as the territorial depth it acquired in Golan, the West Bank, and Sinai, led to an exaggerated sense of superiority over its Arab neighbors.⁹⁸ This, combined with the distraction of Israeli elections in October of 1973, meant that Israel was caught completely unprepared for the Yom Kippur War. Although the Yom Kippur War was a tactical victory, it was costly. Meir and Dayan were blamed for being caught by surprise, and Labor had to seek unlikely partnerships to counter the rise of Likud and Gush

93. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 178.

94. *Ibid.*, 186.

95. *Ibid.*, 190, 205, 212–14.

96. *Ibid.*, 230, 244.

97. *Ibid.*, 195.

98. *Ibid.*, 191.

Emunim.⁹⁹ Land concessions now became more likely. Settlement continued after the war, but this time with a new twist—diplomatic pressure now began to produce increased settlement activity in areas Israel intended to keep.¹⁰⁰

After Meir had to take responsibility for the Yom Kippur War, new elections were called for. Yitzhak Rabin won a narrow victory over Shimon Peres in April of 1974, and his government (with Peres as Defense Minister) barely won parliament's approval in June.¹⁰¹ Contrasted with the Meir administration's false sense of security, Rabin's government was openly insecure. Gorenberg describes the situation well: "The ruling party was fractured, its hold on power fragile, its leaders feuding."¹⁰² Any dissention on settlement policy or discussion of concessions for peace could bring down the administration.¹⁰³ In an atmosphere of distrust, and absent a settlement policy, Gorenberg says, "each official did what was right in his eyes."¹⁰⁴ Many reasons spurred an increased rate of settlement, but foremost among them was a fear of losing the land in peace talks after the 1973 war. New changes from the government included the creation of urban and suburban centers in the Golan Heights and the heart of the West Bank, along with a factory for the Defense Department.¹⁰⁵ The newly formed Likud party gained influence on the right by promoting more aggressive settlement. Gush Emunim, the Bloc of the Faithful, was a non-governmental religious movement that openly challenged the government's stance on areas off limits for settlement.¹⁰⁶ Settlements at Ofrah and Kaddum in the West Bank were forced on the government by Gush Emunim; and the standoff at Sebastia attributed greatly to the delegitimizing of the Labor government.¹⁰⁷ Another change under the Rabin administration included what Gorenberg calls illegalism,

99. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 264, 268.

100. Ibid., 271.

101. Ibid., 274, 283.

102. Ibid., 318.

103. Ibid., 311.

104. Ibid., 346.

105. Ibid., 289, 298.

106. Ibid., 291, 308.

107. Ibid., 314, 317, 326.

which is the government tendency to excuse illegal acts when motivated by nationalism, and supporting political loyalty over the rule of law.¹⁰⁸ Expropriating land from Palestinians was now given governmental approval.¹⁰⁹ Rabin's administration and the decade of Labor dominance fell apart in 1976 amid scandals, feuding, mismanagement, and inability to voice or impose policy and law.¹¹⁰ By 1977, there were approximately seventy-two settlements in the Occupied Territories.¹¹¹

B. LIKUD DOMINANCE: 1977–1987

When compared with the Labor government of the previous decade, Likud was much more militaristic and aggressive in its expansion activities.¹¹² Labor under Rabin had opposed Gush Emunim, but Likud was in coalition “with the National Religious Party dominated by Gush Emunim.”¹¹³ Government settlement positions of authority were given to supporters of Gush Emunim, and settlements like Ofrah and Kaddum in the areas of heavy Arab population were now priority.¹¹⁴ Likud placed utmost importance on the permanent retention of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were part of the ancient land of Israel.¹¹⁵

Menachem Begin became Prime Minister on June 20, 1977, after the collapse of the Labor government. His acceptance speech was given from the West Bank settlement of Elon Moreh, where he promised that there were more such settlements to come.¹¹⁶ Begin added thirty-five settlements during his six years, but he had priorities that did not match up with his Gush Emunim supporters. In March of 1979, Begin signed a peace treaty with Egypt which conceded the Sinai Peninsula, granted limited autonomy to

108. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 294, 340.

109. *Ibid.*, 355.

110. *Ibid.*, 356.

111. *Ibid.*, 347.

112. Taub, *The Settlers*, 61.

113. Lustick, *For the Land*, 40.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*

116. Taub, *The Settlers*, 65.

Palestinians, and put a three month hold on Israel's settlement activities.¹¹⁷ Despite heavy protest, the settlements in the Sinai were removed; Begin's idea of the right to settlement everywhere in the land of Israel was focused on the West Bank and Gaza, and subject to national security and state sovereignty.¹¹⁸ Later that year, after Israel's High Court ruled against expropriation of land for settlement, Begin's administration "declared all unregistered and untended land in rural areas to be state land."¹¹⁹ In May 1980, Israel passed the Jerusalem Law, which extended Israeli law to East Jerusalem, claimed that the united city was now the capital of Israel.¹²⁰ Similarly, the Golan Heights Law of December 1981, extended Israeli law to the Golan.¹²¹ In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon in response to attack from the Lebanese-based PLO. The entanglement in that unpopular war, combined with rising economic inflation, contributed to the resignation of Begin in 1983.¹²²

Yitzhak Shamir assumed the role of Prime Minister until elections could be arranged for September of 1984. The war in Lebanon, hyperinflation, and divisions within Likud dominated this year in office.¹²³ Settlements did expand during this time, but it did not appear to be a focus of a government entangled in war and economic troubles.¹²⁴ Shamir himself, however, was known as a hard-liner on "muscular Zionism

117. Taub, *The Settlers*, 67.

118. Ibid., 66.

119. Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine* (Stanford University Press, 2013), 61.

120. Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 487.

121. Guy Ben-Porat, Yagil Levy, Sholmo Mizrahi, Arye Naor, and Erez Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 50.

122. "Menachem Begin," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 18, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/menachem%20begin.aspx>; Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 76.

123. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 76.

124. "Yitzhak Shamir," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/yitzhak%20shamir.aspx>.

and expansive settlement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.”¹²⁵ The Drobles Plan, proposed in 1983, combined the Allon Plan and Dayan Plan but shows the current popular sentiment by adding many more settlements in the areas of Arab population; it was never adopted.¹²⁶ By 1984, Israel began to use a recently found Ottoman law to justify the confiscation of unused rural land in the Occupied Territories, and shortly after as much as “40 percent of the West Bank was either in private Israeli hands or claimed by the state, and land for the construction of dozen of new settlements had been identified.”¹²⁷

Due to the Lebanon War and inflation troubles, Shamir and his Likud party were unable to secure the 1984 election. A national unity government was established between Likud and Labor. Shimon Peres would serve as Prime Minister for the next two years before Shamir would resume premiership for a second two years.¹²⁸ Although settlement continued, the Peres administration was openly engaged in ending the Lebanon War, initiating the Economic Stability Plan, and exploring a “Jordanian Option” for the Occupied Territories.¹²⁹ The administration’s official statement was that “existing settlements will be developed without interruption,”¹³⁰ but this was not enough for right-wing settlers who claimed Peres was anti-Zionist.¹³¹

Yitzhak Shamir was again made Prime Minister in 1986. Settlement and confiscation of land returned to the increased pace. In 1987, Shamir rejected Jordan’s attempt for peace contingent on withdrawal from the West Bank.¹³² The PLO had been

125. Joel Brinkley, “Yitzhak Shamir, Former Israeli Prime Minister, Dies at 96,” *New York Times*, June 30, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/world/middleeast/yitzhak-shamir-former-prime-minister-of-israel-dies-at-96.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 ; and Azriel Bermant, “The legacy of Yitzhak Shamir,” *The Telegraph*, July 3, 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/9373386/The-legacy-of-Yitzhak-Shamir.html>.

126. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 64.

127. Ibid.

128. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 76.

129. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 96; Lustick, *For the Land*, 124.

130. Lustick, *For the Land*, 161.

131. Ibid., 124.

132. “Biography of Yitzhak Shamir,” *Zionism and Israel – Biographies*, accessed March 18, 2014, http://www.zionism-israel.com/bio/Itzhak_Shamir_biography.htm.

defeated and driven from Lebanon. These things, combined with economic difficulties and continued frustration over Israeli occupation and injustices, left the Palestinian population of the Occupied Territories with nowhere to turn and little hope.¹³³ They faced what Gorenberg describes as “slow-motion annexation,”¹³⁴ By 1987, “over half of the West Bank and one third of the Gaza Strip had been confiscated or otherwise made off limits to Palestinians.”¹³⁵

This year, 1986 to 1987, under Yitzhak Shamir concludes the second decade of Israel’s settlement of the Occupied Territories. With the exception of a brief discussion to occupy and settle southern Lebanon, the settlement activities under Likud dominance differed little from the precedent that began with Eshkol, Allon, and Dayan. Overall, Likud administrations supported more aggressive, less concealed settlement practices than Labor. Although Begin conceded the Sinai, Peres (Labor Party) was the only one to even consider conceding parts of the West Bank.

C. FIRST INTIFADA: 1987–1993

Yitzhak Shamir, a long time Likud leader and settlement hardliner, served again as Prime Minister for all but the final year of the First Intifada. His efforts to increase settlement and the confiscation of land were not reduced by the conflict and international attention.¹³⁶ The internal and external criticism of Israel’s settlement expansions led to a near freeze on new settlements, but existing settlements’ populations in the West Bank more than doubled during the First Intifada.¹³⁷ Land was now free for settlers and government aid was greatly increased.¹³⁸ This led to a change in the settler demography; now more settlers were attracted for economic rather than religious reasons.¹³⁹ Those

133. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 150.

134. *Ibid.*, 369.

135. William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, “Israeli-Palestinian Relations After the Oslo Accords,” In *The Contemporary Middle East: A Westview Reader*, ed. Karl Yambert (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2010), 89.

136. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 81.

137. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 567.

138. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 81.

139. *Ibid.*

settlers who wanted to establish new settlements had to resort to building “unauthorized outposts and settlements,” which were initially overlooked, but eventually supported by the administration.¹⁴⁰ Israel’s increased use of deportations, torture, house demolition, excessive curfews and community isolation were thinly disguised attempts to encourage migration—a mass exodus—of Palestinians to neighboring nations.¹⁴¹ Israel had created an environment in which the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories lived in sub-standard conditions, dependent on Israel for manufactured goods, employment, and even basic resources.¹⁴² Shamir was also instrumental in acquiring the immigration of Russian Jews after the fall of the Soviet Union, and rescuing Jews from Ethiopia in 1991.¹⁴³ However, the biggest success of the Intifada was that it led to the Oslo Accords in 1993.

Due to the negative attention the intifada was causing, Yitzhak Rabin was elected Prime Minister with a popular mandate to reduce settlement activity.¹⁴⁴ As recently as 1987, Rabin had declared that Jerusalem and the surrounding areas “will remain under Israeli sovereignty.”¹⁴⁵ As Defense Minister in the early years of the Intifada, Rabin was known for his “iron fist” policy.¹⁴⁶ Yet when elected Prime Minister, Rabin had already shifted views. He immediately began seeking peace agreements with the PLO. Settlement activity, however, proceeded much as it had in the previous administration. Official government support was limited, but lower level support was easily obtained by right-wing settlers who increased activity under the threat of future West Bank land concessions.¹⁴⁷

In summary, the period of the First Intifada was the first significant change in settlement procedures. Due to the negative internal and external attention that the Intifada

140. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 66.

141. Neve Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 168; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 567.

142. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 566.

143. “Biography of Yitzhak Shamir”

144. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 369.

145. Lustick, *For the Land*, 161.

146. Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 156.

147. Taub, *The Settlers*, 88.

caused, new settlements were very limited. This resulted in the rapid expansion of existing settlements and multiplication of illegal outposts. From 1967, settlement policies had never been officially adopted, although they were openly supported at the highest levels of government. During the First Intifada, open government support became rare, replaced by lower level government and civilian efforts which were hidden in ambiguity. Overall, according to data the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, the annual rate of settlement growth throughout this period was over 10 percent (see Figure 3¹⁴⁸).

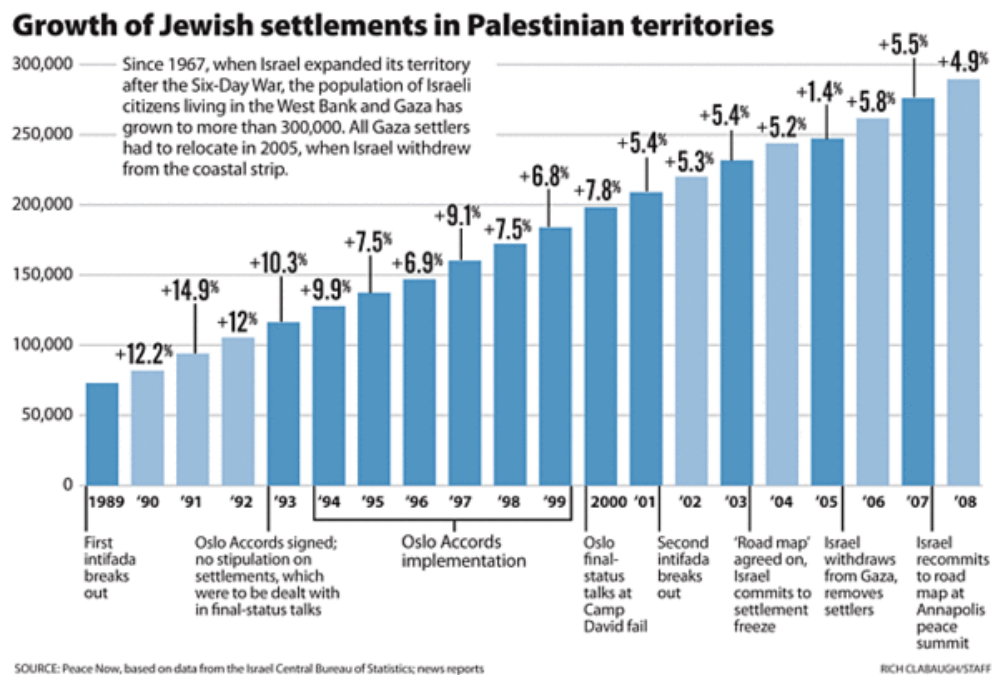


Figure 3. Settlement Population Growth Rate (from Mitnick, 2009)

D. OSLO ACCORDS: 1993–2000

Yitzhak Rabin shocked his nation and the world with the announcement of Oslo I in September of 1993. He had spent the previous year talking and planning for it, nevertheless, Likud leaders such as Netanyahu and Sharon were openly and harshly

148. Joshua Mitnick, “Obama demands that Israel stop settlements. How feasible is that?” The Christian Science Monitor, May 21, 2009, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/0521/p06s01-wome.html>.

critical.¹⁴⁹ Oslo I was extremely unpopular with right-wing settlers who depicted Rabin as a Nazi or an Arab, and labeled him traitor.¹⁵⁰ Oslo led to an Israeli/Jordanian peace agreement, as well as the return of Yasser Arafat and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994.¹⁵¹ Rabin justified the Oslo Accords by explaining that the Palestinian Authority was to bear the burden and responsibility for Palestinian violence, thus letting Israel off the hook while it retained ultimate control of the territory.¹⁵² Neve Gordon describes this as “outsourcing” the most troubling aspects and responsibilities of the Occupied Territories to the Palestinian Authority.¹⁵³ In effect, the Palestinian Authority became “an arm of Israeli power.”¹⁵⁴ In reaction to Oslo, right-wing settlers initiated “Operation Doubling” with the goal of adding one settlement for every existing one.¹⁵⁵ The rapid growth of illegal outposts is often associated with this period, as was found in Tayla Sason’s well-known investigation on the emergence of the outposts.¹⁵⁶ In the end, a two-state solution and land concessions were too much for some to bear. Rabbis of the settlements discussed whether Rabin was worthy of death for “crimes” he had already committed, or for those he could commit in the future.¹⁵⁷ Efforts to derail the peace process ultimately resulted in the tragedies of the 1994 Tomb of the Patriarchs massacre and Rabin’s assassination in November of 1995.¹⁵⁸

Shimon Peres returned to the premiership for seven months after Rabin’s assassination until elections could take place. As Foreign Minister under Rabin since 1992, Peres continually expressed the desire to pursue peace with the Palestinians and

149. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 635.

150. *Ibid.*, 634.

151. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 629; Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 171.

152. Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 171.

153. *Ibid.*, 189.

154. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 85.

155. Taub, *The Settlers*, 110.

156. Talya Sason, “Summary of the Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outposts,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, March 10, 2005, accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>.

157. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 371.

158. *Ibid.*, 370–71.

Arab neighbors. Peres had been a supporter of the “Gaza First” plan for giving Gaza limited autonomy, as well as the chief supporter of the Oslo talks.¹⁵⁹ After the assassination of Rabin, however, Peres did not proceed with the Palestinian talks.¹⁶⁰ His time was consumed with election preparation, an IDF drawback from portions of the Occupied Territories, and countering a massive terrorist bombing campaign against Israel.¹⁶¹ Riding on the progress of the Oslo Accords and the sympathy after the Rabin assassination, Peres was favored to win the elections, but high levels of terrorist activity turned the tide.¹⁶²

Benjamin Netanyahu won the election for Likud in May 1996. Perhaps typical for Likud, Netanyahu was less willing to trade land for peace. Although he did promise to abide by the Oslo Accords, and he himself signed the Hebron and Wye River peace agreements, he drug his feet in fulfilling the agreements.¹⁶³ Despite these agreements, Netanyahu resumed open and aggressive land confiscation and settlement activities in order to prevent conceding land to the Palestinian Authority.¹⁶⁴ Netanyahu appeared untrustworthy to the United States, the Palestinian Authority, and to his own government. He promised his right-wing base not to agree to concede land, but broke that promise at Wye. He then openly told the left that he had no intention of fulfilling the agreement.¹⁶⁵ Ariel Sharon, Israel’s Foreign Minister under Netanyahu, was also at the Wye River talks. Upon returning to Israel, Sharon encouraged settlers over public radio to “grab more hills, expand the territory. Everything that’s grabbed, will be in our hands. Everything we don’t grab will be in their hands.”¹⁶⁶ Also, a new dimension was added to the settlement activities under Netanyahu. The practices of separation decreased the

159. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 164; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 260.

160. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 96.

161. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 636.

162. Ibid.

163. Robert O. Freedman, “Israel and the Arabs, and Beyond,” In *The Contemporary Middle East: A Westview Reader*, ed. Karl Yambert (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2010), 73.

164. Cleveland and Bunton, “Israeli-Palestinian Relations,” 96–97.

165. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 648.

166. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 371.

security threat of suicide bombers, secured land in the Occupied Territories, as well as handicapped the Palestinians and Palestinian Authority.¹⁶⁷ Separation procedures included building walls, Jewish-only roads, closing off Palestinian towns, limiting movement, and requiring permits for work and travel.¹⁶⁸ Economic troubles, international isolation, failures of the peace agreements, as well as Netanyahu's untrustworthiness led to his defeat in 1999.¹⁶⁹

Ehud Barak was voted into office with a large majority, giving him a mandate for "intensive peace negotiations."¹⁷⁰ Barak withdrew Israeli troops from Lebanon after seventeen years of occupation.¹⁷¹ He negotiated with Syria without success. He also agreed to uphold and improve upon the Wye River agreement with Arafat.¹⁷² In Camp David Accords of 2000, peace talks fell apart over disagreements on East Jerusalem and the Old City, "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, and territorial contiguity of the Palestinian West Bank.¹⁷³ For the first time an Israeli Prime Minister was seriously offering to concede part of Jerusalem and a majority of the West Bank and Gaza. The "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, however, would have allowed refugees from the 1948 War of Independence, or their children, to return to Israeli territory, thus greatly endangering Jewish majority within the State of Israel. Another issue was the continuing growth of Israel's settlements.¹⁷⁴ From 1993 to 2000, under the Oslo Accords, the settlement population in the Occupied Territories rose by 58 percent.¹⁷⁵ The failure of the Camp David Accords in July 2000 is a causal factor for the September 2000 beginning of the Second Intifada.

167. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 88.

168. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 88.

169. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 650.

170. *Ibid.*, 652.

171. Dan Ephron, "Israeli Defense Minister Barak Quits Politics," *The Daily Beast*, November 26, 2012, accessed March 19, 2014, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/11/26/israeli-defense-minister-barak-quits-politics.html>.

172. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 653.

173. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 659; Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 197.

174. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 654.

175. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 372.

Settlement in this period of the Oslo Accords was officially frozen or greatly reduced, yet the “illegal” growth of settlements continued unabated. However, this period is also characterized by Israel’s greatest willingness to concede land for peace. The Israeli proposals of Oslo and Camp David were “the most far-reaching Israeli concessions ever offered.”¹⁷⁶ Hope for peace agreement was at an all-time high, and yet terrorist attacks and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin did irreparable damage to that hope. Separation policies included building walls, Jewish-only roads, and limiting Palestinian movement. These policies increased the economic hardship and effective control over legal actions of Palestinians, which embittered them all the more.

E. SECOND INTIFADA: 2000–2005

After the Second Intifada began on September 29, 2000, Ehud Barak attempted to quickly resolve the conflict by employing the IDF with de-escalation and restraint in mind, allowing open media coverage of the conflict (although this worked against him), and attempting a last effort at a peace agreement with Arafat and U.S. President Clinton. Barak and the Israeli government eventually agreed to concede even more of the West Bank, evacuate most settlements, concede the Temple Mount, and accept limited “right of return.” Arafat, perhaps wanting to see where the Second Intifada would lead, refused to budge. With that, Barak broke off further peace talks and resigned on December 9, 2000.¹⁷⁷

Ariel Sharon, called by some the father of the settlement movement,¹⁷⁸ was elected Prime Minister in March 2001, “determined to put down the [Second Intifada] with military force.”¹⁷⁹ At the same time, Israel continued to confiscate land in the West Bank.¹⁸⁰ Settlement population growth continued at about five percent despite the

176. Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 659.

177. *Ibid.*, 660–673.

178. “Israeli-Palestinian settlements deadlock: Echo of Sharon’s policies?” *RT.com*, January 11, 2014, accessed March 15, 2014, <http://rt.com/news/israel-settlements-ariel-sharon-466/>.

179. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 373.

180. Joyce Dalsheim, *Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.

violence of the Second Intifada.¹⁸¹ By 2003, however, Sharon had undergone a profound switch and decided on a complete withdrawal (military and civilian settlers) from the Gaza Strip.¹⁸² Sharon's motivations are difficult to determine, but most likely involved the excessive trouble caused by Gaza (including the large Palestinian population and extreme poverty contributing to terrorist activity), securing more defensible borders, protecting a Jewish majority, and gaining international bargaining power.¹⁸³ Sharon had always been a supporter of settlement activities, mostly to improve the security of Israel; now the settlements, in Sharon's eyes, were a security burden to be quickly sacrificed for overall national security concerns.¹⁸⁴ Azoulay and Ophir claim that Sharon's withdrawal was a continuation of the separation ideology that had begun under Netanyahu and gained popularity with the start of the Second Intifada.¹⁸⁵ Although Sharon had campaigned on the traditional Likud values of maintaining as much of the Occupied Territories as possible, his switch was not without support. The Knesset, the Supreme Court, and a majority of the general public approved withdrawal from Gaza.¹⁸⁶ The date for the end of the Second Intifada is debatable, but for the purposes of this paper, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in August 2005 marks the end of this period. Only a short time later, in January 2006, Prime Minister Sharon had a heart attack from which he never recovered.

As discussed, Israeli settlement population growth in the Occupied Territories during the Second Intifada remained above five percent, and land confiscation also continued during this time. Continuous settlement activities, as part of a larger, long-term system of occupation, suppression, and injustice, were a major cause of the Second Intifada. The proposed concessions of the Barak administration, as well as the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, testify to the changing attitude within Israel toward settlement activities. These were large breaks with the trends set in the first decade under Eshkol,

181. Mitnick, "Obama demands."

182. Taub, *The Settlers*, 123.

183. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 374.

184. Taub, *The Settlers*, 123.

185. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 88.

186. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 374.

Allon, and Dayan. Other aspects of the situation affected settlement in indirect ways. These include the separation policies which also could have been intended to increase hardship and lead to Palestinian migration or acquiescence, and the maintenance of a Jewish majority within Israel and certain areas of the Occupied Territories which it planned to retain. This factor can help explain the withdrawal from Gaza and the continual resistance to Palestinian “right of return.”

F. CURRENT PERIOD: 2005–2014

When Ariel Sharon decided to withdraw from Gaza, he split from the Likud Party and formed the Kadima with Ehud Olmert. The Kadima Party platform was based on unilateral withdrawal from the Occupied Territories.¹⁸⁷ Olmert assumed the premiership when Sharon was no longer able to have it, and was then elected Prime Minister in March 2006. During the campaign, Olmert unveiled his convergence plan for the Occupied Territories (see Figure 4¹⁸⁸).¹⁸⁹ This plan provided a two-state solution and involved the consolidation of Israel’s West Bank settlements near the 1967 Green Line. These areas of heavy Jewish settlement were to be annexed to Israel in exchange for lightly populated areas in Israel to be annexed by Palestine. This would have involved the dismantling and relocation of large amounts of Israeli settlements. One source estimated that roughly one-third of Israel’s West Bank settlers were to be evacuated.¹⁹⁰ If the Palestinian Authority would not agree to this plan, Israel would be prepared to act unilaterally, as it had in Gaza. However, Israel’s mismanagement of the 2006 Lebanon War derailed this plan. Additionally, escalating violence from Gaza cast doubt on the wisdom of unilateral withdrawal.¹⁹¹ Under Olmert, land confiscation and settlement growth was still proceeding—especially around Jerusalem—despite his plans for peace and a two-state

187. Taub, *The Settlers*, 10.

188. “Israel’s Plan,” Australians For Palestine, 2008, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.australiansforpalestine.net/solutions/israels-plan>.

189. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 88–89.

190. Angela Godfrey-Goldstein, “Ehud Olmert’s “Convergence Plan.”” *The Electronic Intifada*, May 29, 2006, accessed March 13, 2014, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/ehud-olmerts-convergence-plan/5986>.

191. “Ehud Olmert,” Jewish Virtual Library, accessed March 12, 2014, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/olmert.html>

solution.¹⁹² Olmert was investigated, tried, and impeached in 2008 for corruption, but maintained the caretaker government until Netanyahu was reelected in 2009.¹⁹³



Figure 4. The Olmert Plan (from “Australians for Palestine,” 2008)

Benjamin Netanyahu’s second term as Prime Minister was a return to Likud settlement tactics. Peace talks were stalled for his first three years in office, years in which the settlement population continued to grow at an average of six percent annually.¹⁹⁴ Netanyahu has been committed to maintaining the status quo—Israeli

192. Godfrey-Goldstein, “Olmert’s Convergence Plan.”

193. Phoebe Greenwood, “Ehud Olmert convicted in corruption case,” *The Guardian*, July 10, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/10/ehud-olmert-guilty-corruption>.

194. “Israeli settler population surges under Netanyahu,” *Fox News*, July 09, 2012, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/07/09/israeli-settler-population-surges-under-netanyahu/>.

control over the Occupied Territories while avoiding any two-state solution.¹⁹⁵ As has been typical in the last decade, most settlers were attracted to the subsidized housing that the government offered in the Occupied Territories.¹⁹⁶ These tend to be near the border areas. There are still some, although a smaller amount, that settle for ideological reason, religious or nationalistic. On November 29, 2012, the UN passed a resolution which granted Palestine non-member observer state status.¹⁹⁷ The Netanyahu administration's response was to increase settlement construction in the E1 area of East Jerusalem (considered by Israel to have been annexed unofficially in 1967, officially in 1980).¹⁹⁸

This current period shows that Israel's dichotomy in relation to settlements is becoming more obvious and more pronounced. Under Olmert, Israel for its part was very close to major concessions, real settlement reduction, and a two-state solution. Olmert's convergence plan provides a flash back to Allon and Dayan, but shows that Israel has shifted away from using the Jordan Rift as a security buffer in this age of military technology. Netanyahu's delay tactics and settlement expansion point to the other extreme, and signify that the choices between Israel's right and left are approaching an all-or-nothing status. But the trends of ambiguity, delaying, using loopholes, and lower-level government initiative still hold.

Israel's official policy on the settlement of the West Bank and other occupied territories is not to have an official policy. A second characteristic of settlement policy is that it must change often. There are certain consistencies, however, which can be summed up in vagueness, indecision, and delay. When inquiring about Israel's settlement policy, it is most helpful to look at two things. First, what is the administration's political composition? Secondly, what is the government doing—as opposed to what it is saying—at both the highest and lowest levels? It will also be very interesting to look at

195. "Israeli settler population."

196. "Israeli settler population."

197. "United Nations Resolution 67/19," General Assembly of the United Nations: 67th Session, accessed March 12, 2014, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/PV.44.

198. Herb Keinon, "Netanyahu: Gov't okayed E1 planning, not building," *The Jerusalem Post*, December 2, 2012, accessed March 18, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Netanyahu-Govt-okayed-E1-planning-not-building>.

the role of Religious Zionism and its influence on the government's settlement activities.
This will be the subject of the following chapter.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS ZIONISM ON SETTLEMENT OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Religious Zionism is a movement with members that span the spectrum of Israeli society, from the ordinary yeshiva student to the highest government ministries. Religious Zionism attempts to influence Israel's settlement policies and activities at every level of this spectrum. At the lowest level, small groups of religiously motivated individuals attempt to create settlements without regard to government considerations or restrictions. Religious Zionists also appear at the highest levels of the State, filling political parties and ministries, and affecting the government's settlement policies and actions in an official capacity. Social movements such as Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) fill the middle of this spectrum, and endeavor to increase public support for small-scale settlement efforts as well as apply extraparliamentary pressure at the government level. Within this chapter, I explore in each of these three areas some of the most prominent examples of opportunities for religious Zionism to substantial influence settlement policy.

A. THE SETTLERS: INFLUENCE ON THE GROUND

The first and most obvious example of religious Zionism's influence over Israel's settlement policy is the establishment of unauthorized settlements in the occupied territories.¹⁹⁹ Small groups of settlers are able to act in defiance of the government's authority with a large measure of impunity. Although numerous examples exist, I sample the cases of Hebron and Elon Moreh in the Labor era (1967—1977), and the proliferation of illegal outposts in the period after the Oslo Accords (1993—2000). These cases are important because Hebron and Elon Moreh involve significant clashes between the government and settlers, while the shift to illegal outposts is a major change in tactics.

Although the settlement at Gush Etzion (est. Sep. 1967) preceded the settlement at Hebron, Hebron provides the first major example of a settlement forced on the government. Hebron is called the City of Abraham, and contains the Tomb of the

199. Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 150.

Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Figure 1²⁰⁰).²⁰¹ It was also the city from which King David ruled before he conquered Jerusalem.²⁰² Additionally, Hebron was, along with Gush Etzion and the Old City in Jerusalem, a place with a significant Jewish settlement prior to 1948.²⁰³ Because it was the resting place of Abraham, Hebron is also a place of significance to Muslims; the Tomb of the Patriarchs is also known as Ibrahimi Mosque. It was for these reasons that the heretofore little known Rabbi Moshe Levinger, a disciple of Zvi Kook, decided a Jewish settlement was necessary in Hebron.²⁰⁴ Levinger made some attempt to obtain the government's permission, but the divided government could not make a decision on Hebron.²⁰⁵ In April of 1968, the impatient Levinger led a small group to illegally move into a hotel in Hebron to celebrate Passover week.²⁰⁶ Levinger and his group may have received permission from the army to stay for one night, but Levinger brought his household goods and appliances—he did not intend to leave.²⁰⁷ Not only that, but characteristic of Levinger, this group was very brash and contentious during their stay. Levinger “demanded” security assistance from the army, and was supplied with arms in addition to police guards.²⁰⁸ The group also made brazen visits to the Tomb of the Patriarchs and the Palestinian mayor's office. The local army commander was reluctant to remove these Jews from Hebron during Passover week, and thereafter waited for a decision from the government. The government, as previously stated, was divided. Allon visited the settlement to show support, followed by Begin and others. Most other officials, including Prime Minister Eshkol, were against allowing Levinger's group to stay. The settlement of Hebron was still undecided, but it was the methods used by Levinger which caused the most objections. Allowing a small religious

200. “Facts on the Ground: The APN Map Project, Americans for Peace Now,” 2011, <http://archive.peacenow.org/map.php>.

201. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 80.

202. *Ibid.*, 151.

203. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 50.

204. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 138.

205. *Ibid.*, 139.

206. Lustick, *For the Land*, 42.

207. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 143.

208. *Ibid.*, 145.

group to dictate settlement policy and ultimately the fate of the newly occupied territories was outrageous. Eshkol indicated that this would weaken the military and state authority in the occupied territories, and possibly lead to an escalation of the contention.²⁰⁹ Ian Lustick describes the government's shocked reaction in this way, "internally divided, depending for its survival on the votes of the National Religious Party...the Labor government backed away from its original prohibition against civilian settlement in the area."²¹⁰ For the next year and a half the government wrestled with itself on how to best remove the stubborn Rabbi Levinger from Hebron. The compromise forced on the government resulted in the establishment of Kiryat Arba, one of the largest settlements to date.²¹¹ This event put a significant crack in the government's ability to control religious settlers.²¹²



Figure 5. Location of Kiryat Arba (after "Facts on the Ground," 2011)

209. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 158.

210. Lustick, *For the Land*, 42.

211. *Ibid.*, 43.

212. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 145–50.

The most dramatic and well known clash between religious settlers and the state involved the Elon Moreh group in their efforts to establish a settlement in the Nablus area (see Figure 2²¹³). Members of the Elon Moreh group would help found the up-and-coming Gush Emunim in 1974. In June of that year, this group of religious settlers, tired of waiting for government approval, began to build a settlement they called Elon Moreh at the Hawarah army base near Nablus. Before the group was removed by the Israeli army, several prominent figures including Ariel Sharon and Rabbi Zvi Kook appeared at the site to show support for their efforts.²¹⁴ One month later the same group, now called the Elon Moreh group after the name of the settlement they attempted to create, tried to establish their settlement or force a concession from the government at Sebastia train station. In this second attempt, they were supported by well-known figures like Hanan Porat and Moshe Levinger, and visited onsite by Menachem Begin and fourteen other Knesset members.²¹⁵ The group, however, was again removed by the army. These first two attempts were very civil in nature, with each side empathizing with the other.²¹⁶ Although these attempts to settle in a prohibited area were illegal, the settlers were defended and called patriots by sympathizers at the highest levels of government.²¹⁷ At least five more attempts were made by this Elon Moreh group to settle in this Nablus area. Each attempt resulted in increased hostility between the settlers and the government, with the army caught in the middle.²¹⁸ The culmination was reached in December of 1975 at Sebastia. The settlers used a different tactic this time, choosing to attempt the settlement over the week-long Hanukah celebration and making the demonstration hugely public. To avoid a nasty confrontation and allow time to find a solution, the government allowed the group to stay through the holiday. Media coverage brought daily updates, and the holiday activities were attended by well-known rabbis, songwriters, poets, and

213. Facts on the Ground, <http://archive.peacenow.org/map.php>.

214. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 281.

215. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 293.

216. *Ibid.*, 294.

217. *Ibid.*, 294.

218. *Ibid.*, 309–10.

between three and four thousand people.²¹⁹ By the end of the week, the government had decided to remove the settlers and demonstrators, but a back-door compromise forced a furious Rabin administration to establish a settlement at nearby Camp Kaddum.²²⁰ Gershom Gorenberg describes the government's stake in this settlement contest as a direct compromise of its regional defense and diplomacy.²²¹ Ehud Sprinzak, in *Brother Against Brother*, describes this clash in much more hostile terms, saying that Sebastia was “a concession recognized by everybody as a humiliating defeat for the government.”²²² This conflict would only escalate over the years. Rabin remembered this defeat and Oslo was at least in part a reprisal.²²³ These charged interactions between Rabin and the settlers would eventually result in Rabin's assassination at the hands of a religious radical.²²⁴ The crack in the government's ability to restrict religiously motivated settlement now became a full-blown breach.

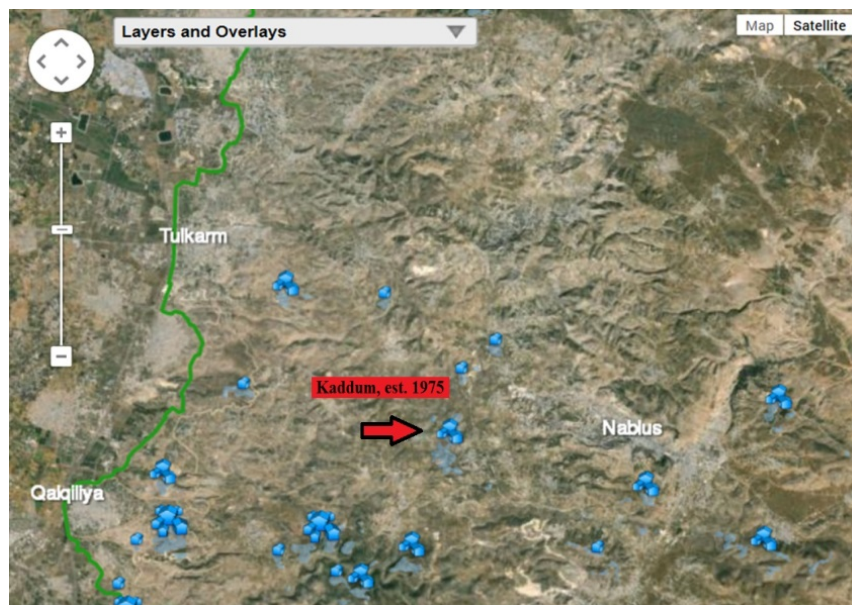


Figure 6. Location of Kaddum (after “Facts on the Ground,” 2011)

219. Ibid., 329.

220. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 331, 339. Camp Kaddum would later become the Kdumim settlement (Taub, *The Settlers*), 60.

221. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 308.

222. Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), 252.

223. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 252.

224. Ibid., 253.

A third example of religious settlers influencing the state's settlement policy is the rapid growth of the illegal outposts following the Oslo Accords of 1993 (see Figure 3²²⁵). The circumstances surrounding these illegal outposts differ greatly from the previous two examples. As discussed in chapter two, Rabbi Zvi Kook transformed religious Zionism into a movement centered on the *mitzvah dalet*, the biblical command to possess and settle the Land of Israel. We explored the logic wherein this command must supersede other commands because all other commands depend (in the mind of religious Zionists) upon Torah law extended over the Whole Land of Israel, or stated succinctly in the slogan of Gush Emunim, "the Land of Israel, for the People of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel."²²⁶ The next step in the evolution of this idea was the justification of immoral acts in order to secure the land and settlement activity. Zvi Kook and his disciples also taught that God would not allow setbacks such as the evacuation of Yamit in April, 1982.²²⁷ As a result of a series of perceived defeats, to include the Camp David Accords in 1978, the Elon Moreh verdict of 1979, and the evacuation of Yamit in 1982, religious Zionists became more extreme in their actions and beliefs. The Jewish Underground was the first example of this extremism, but it reached its apex in the Goldstein massacre and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.²²⁸ Confronted with the realization of where their ideology led them, and unable to reconcile these deeds post facto with the Torah they claimed to champion, the leaders of the religious Zionist community entered a "theological silence."²²⁹ This religious movement had become morally bankrupt. However, unable to divorce themselves from at least two decades of crusading, religious settlers turned to the only thing they had left. Despite the prohibition on settlements stipulated in the Oslo Accords, or because of them, the settlers initiated Operation Doubling, which resulted in the rapid growth of illegal outposts.²³⁰ Though much of the theological rhetoric surrounding settlement was now silenced, the

225. Facts on the Ground, <http://archive.peacenow.org/map.php>.

226. Lustick, *For the Land*, 8.

227. Taub, *The Settlers*, 85.

228. Ibid., 97.

229. Aviezer Ravitzky quoted in Taub, *The Settlers*, 100.

230. Taub, *The Settlers*, 110.

vast majority of the settlers themselves were still motivated by religious and nationalist ideology.²³¹ Talya Sason, in her formative investigation into Israel's illegal outposts, discovered that settlement activity had continued unabated since Oslo, with one major difference. The higher levels of the Israeli government, those elected officials charged with maintaining the rule of law—in this case the prohibition on settlements—were intentionally but discreetly removed from this sphere of influence. Though law required that the highest levels of government control the settlement process, it was in fact almost exclusively supported at the second tier, the executive echelon, as Sason calls it.²³² This is what made the outposts illegal.²³³ Sason makes it clear that these outposts are initiated by the settlers through a variety of ways (requesting educational facilities, farms, or even antennas), but quickly supported by the lower levels of government without the higher levels becoming involved at all.²³⁴ Azoulay and Ophir, in *The One-State Condition*, also attribute the initiation of these outposts to the settlers.²³⁵ However, Gadi Taub makes the strongest argument for religious Zionists' continuation in leading the settlement enterprise. He credits Moshe Feiglin, a religious Zionist, with Operation Doubling, and this group of settlers with encouraging remote settlements and bypass roads for Jews only.²³⁶ Taub claims the goal of these settlers was to prevent partition of the West Bank by establishing Jews in every area and isolating the Palestinian communities with restricted roads.²³⁷

231. Sason, "Summary," n.p.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>.

232. Sason, "Summary," n.p.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>.

233. These outposts are illegal when compared to the previous settlements, which were approved according to Israeli law. All settlements, however, are illegal according to the Fourth Geneva Convention. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 92.

234. Sason, "Summary," n.p.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>.

235. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 91.

236. Taub, *The Settlers*, 111.

237. *Ibid.*, 111.

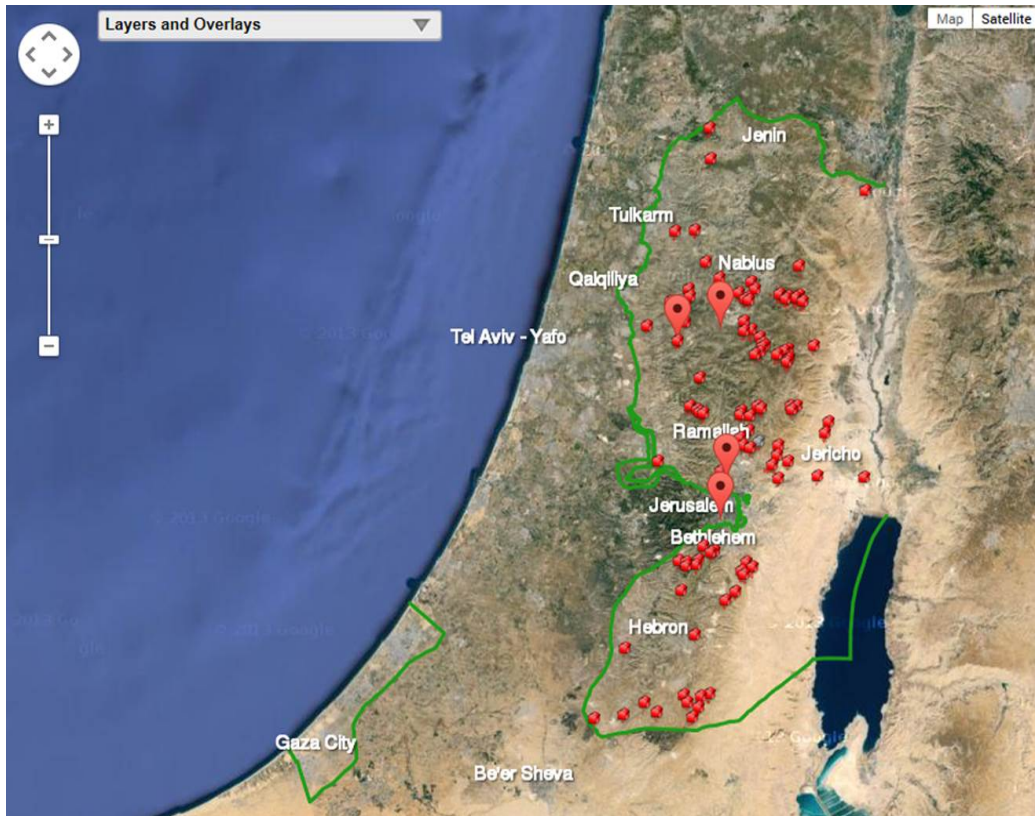


Figure 7. Location of Illegal Outposts (from “Facts on the Ground,” 2011)

In summary, the settlements at Hebron and Kaddum show how the settlers themselves acted without the prior consent of the government. The government was divided on if and where to settle, with some members of the government adamantly opposed to either the methods of the settlers or the locations they chose. The settlers used their religious credentials, and motivation to obey a divine command (the *mitzvah dalet*), in an attempt to gain the moral high-ground. As a result of the settlers’ actions in these two locations, it proved easier for the government to give permission to the settlers after the fact than to force their evacuation. Neve Gordon makes the argument in *Israel’s Occupation* that if the government truly objected, it could have stopped the establishment of these and other settlements.²³⁸ His conclusion is that the settlers were acting with the consent of the government and furthering its purposes throughout these clashes, and that “each camp [the government and the settlers], for its own reasons, wanted to present the

238. Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, 124.

interaction as a confrontation between forces holding diametrically opposing views.”²³⁹ I agree with Gordon that the Israeli government, if not constrained by other factors, was more than capable of overcoming the challenges posed by these settlement attempts. There were, however, other constraints on the government that have been previously discussed. The Labor Party was running an increasingly fragile coalition government. Officials and citizens throughout the country were conflicted over what to do with the restoration of their ancient homeland. The government was under scrutiny by the international community, and peace with Israel’s Arab neighbors and the Palestinians in the occupied territory was never certain. In light of these factors, another plausible argument was that the settlers at Hebron and Kaddum were able to exploit the constraints of the government and force it to make concession which it did not want to make. After the Oslo Accords, the religious Zionists lost their moral high-ground with the Goldstein massacre and Rabin’s assassination. They fell back on the only thing that remained to them, creating facts on the ground in spite of the Oslo prohibition. Although the lower levels of government certainly cooperated and supported the settlers, the proliferation of illegal outpost from the early nineties through 2005 can arguably be better attributed to a religious Zionist community responding to a monumental challenge to their doctrines and legitimacy. Having examined these cases where settlers at the ground level of society attempt to influence government policy, I will now discuss the higher level of religious Zionism’s influence within the government itself.

B. POLITICAL PARTIES AND MINISTRIES: INFLUENCE FROM WITHIN

A second example of religious Zionism’s ability to influence Israeli settlement policy is the existence of political parties founded with the expressed intent of maintaining control of the occupied territories and encouraging settlement there. The National Religious Party is the best, though not the only, example of this.

The National Religious Party (NRP) was founded in 1956, from a merger of parties, some of which traced back as far back as 1902.²⁴⁰ The NRP still exists today

²³⁹. Ibid.

²⁴⁰. Liebman and Don-Yehiya, *Religion and Politics*, 57.

within a coalition called the Jewish Home, which it joined in 2008.²⁴¹ From the Third Knesset in 1955²⁴² through the Ninth Knesset, ending in 1981, the NRP was the leading political party of the religious Zionist community, holding between eight and ten percent of Knesset seats, and therefore strong enough to deserve special favor from larger coalition-building parties.²⁴³ After 1981, the religious Zionist political community fragmented into several parties, none able to represent the whole as the NRP had previously done.²⁴⁴ Today as part of the Jewish Home, it holds 11 seats and is the fifth largest party in Israel.²⁴⁵

The NRP's constituents are Orthodox Jews who accept much of modernity, yet their religious foundations cannot be denied. Cohen and Susser explain that the NRP's pro-settlement stance is based upon biblical imperatives which prohibit the surrender of territory or hindrance of settlement. The NRP has on occasion been the leading government entity in promoting retention and settlement of the occupied territories. Unlike some who espouse security reasons for the settlement enterprise, the NRP has consistently used religion to support their aggressive stance. In other words, the NRP's aggressive settlement position is founded in religion more than nationalism or security.²⁴⁶

Additionally, the NRP has often held ministry positions which further the progression of settlement. These include the ministries of Transportation, Construction and Housing, National Infrastructures, Religious Affairs, Education and Culture, Welfare, and the Interior.²⁴⁷ Through these ministries, the NRP has been able to promote and support settlement activity with employment, housing, schools, roads, and more.

241. Israel Political Parties: the Jewish Home, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 14, 2014, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/JewishHome.html>.

242. Third Knesset, Knesset.gov.il, <https://www.knesset.gov.il/review/ReviewPage2.aspx?kns=3&lng=3>. The merger forming the NRP happened a year after the elections.

243. Cohen and Susser, *Israel and the Politics*, 48.

244. *Ibid.*, 49.

245. The Jewish Home, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/JewishHome.html>.

246. Cohen and Susser, *Israel and the Politics*, 58; Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 34.

247. National Religious Party, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 14, 2014, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_14603.html.

Although this may appear to give government consent to the settlement enterprise, that is not always the case. Israel has a long and well-documented history of ministers acting outside of their official prerogatives, either for party interests, personal interests, or the interests of acquaintances. Instead of allowing significant settlement decisions to be made by the collective cabinet according to regulation, ministers have a propensity for making these decisions themselves.²⁴⁸ This case is made by Talya Sason in her 2005 investigation of Israel's illegal outposts.²⁴⁹ In fact, the NRP filled the Ministry of Housing and Construction, as well as the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services during Sason's investigation.²⁵⁰ Sason relates that the office of the Ministry of Housing and Construction resisted her inquiries into illegal outposts and falsified the information it gave her.²⁵¹

Does the Israeli government take responsibility for the actions committed outside of protocol? Yes and no. Azoulay and Ophir explain that if the government calls the settlements resulting from these actions illegal, then it can deny responsibility.²⁵² Gadi Taub says that Prime Minister Sharon tried to reduce the negative connotation in another way, by calling the outposts unauthorized as opposed to illegal.²⁵³ However, the government cannot deny that the settlements are receiving government support, to include the protection of the army.²⁵⁴ If the government must bear the ultimate responsibility, the direct responsibility lies with the ministries who supply the unauthorized support, some of which are filled with NRP members dedicated to settlement practices.

248. Gorenberg, *Accidental Empire*, 150.

249. Sason, "Summary," n.p.
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>.

250. Sixteenth Knesset: Government 30, Governments of Israel, accessed June 14, 2014,
http://www.knesset.gov.il/govt/eng/GovtByNumber_eng.asp?govt=30.

251. Sason, "Summary," n.p.
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/law/pages/summary%20of%20opinion%20concerning%20unauthorized%20outposts%20-%20talya%20sason%20adv.aspx>

252. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 92.

253. Taub, *The Settlers*, 203n1.

254. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 92.

Besides the National Religious Party, Israel has had several other political parties promoting various shades of religious Zionism. The most radical of these are the Tehiya (or Tchiya) Party and the Kach Party. Tehiya was founded in 1979 by secular and religious nationalists who rejected Menachem Begin's Camp David agreement to give up the Sinai for peace with Egypt. Although this was not a purely religious party, it was supported by Rabbi Zvi Kook and its members included religious leaders like Porat, Katsover, and Levinger, people with well-known reputations as devoutly religious.²⁵⁵ Dissatisfied with the NRP's acceptance of the Camp David agreement, these more radical religious Zionist helped formed Tehiya in an attempt to block the withdrawal of Sinai by winning Knesset seats in the 1981 election. Tehiya won only three seats, but helped organize a physical resistance to the withdrawal in 1982. Tehiya did succeed in pressuring the government to annex East Jerusalem and increase the settlement housing in the West Bank. Tehiya also promoted the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories.²⁵⁶ Even more extreme, Tehiya threatened civil war if the government relinquished land in Gaza or the West Bank. In 1992, Tehiya left the ruling coalition—collapsing the government—over Prime Minister Shamir's plans for surrendering control of the occupied territories, but the move proved to be self-destructive. Tehiya never regained significant power.²⁵⁷

The Kach Party is the most extreme example of religious Zionist parties. Founded in 1971 by Rabbi Meir Kahane, the Kach Party platform was, among other things, the forced expulsion of the Palestinian population from the occupied territories.²⁵⁸ However, Kahane would not say that the Kach Party was based on a prejudice against Palestinians (he called them Arabs); they were to be respected, but had no place in Greater Israel.²⁵⁹ The Kach Party was therefore a strong supporter of the settlement enterprise, but it was

255. Charles S. Liebman, ed., *Religious and Secular: Conflict and Accommodation Between Jews in Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1990), 134.

256. Israel Political Parties: Tehiya, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 14, 2014, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Tehiya.html>.

257. Friedman, *Zealots*, 140–41.

258. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 58.

259. Juergensmeyer, *Terror*, 56.

banded from running in elections in 1985 because of its racist views.²⁶⁰ Following the massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in 1994, the Kach Party was declared illegal in Israel.²⁶¹ The following year, Prime Minister Rabin was assassinated by another religious radical who could be traced back to Kahane.²⁶² As a result, Kahane and his Kach Party did irreparable damage to the religious Zionist community and their settlement efforts. These events are largely responsible for the settlement movement transitioning to the tactic of establishing the illegal outposts.²⁶³ Conversely, the Oslo Accords which Rabin initiated, and which would have further endangered dreams of a united Greater Israel, were never fully realized.²⁶⁴

There are several other examples of political parties founded on religious Zionism: Morasha, Moledat, Tkuma, National Union, and more recently Ahi and Eretz Yisrael Shelanu.²⁶⁵ Religious Zionism's presence at the highest levels of government—the Knesset and Ministry Departments—speaks of its ability to influence policies concerning the retention and settlement of the occupied territories. Influence at this level is not as powerful as it at first appears, however. As discussed in the previous chapter, Israel's government is characterized by compromise and indecision, which reduce the influence of any party and limit political aspiration.

C. GUSH EMUNIM: BRIDGING THE GAP

No discussion on the influence of religious Zionism is complete without mentioning Gush Emunim. I have argued that the settlements at Hebron and Kaddum were pushed onto a reluctant government, showing the influence of religious Zionism from the lowest level. I have also argued that political parties founded on religious Zionism have influenced the government at the highest levels. Gush Emunim is the

260. Israel Political Parties: Kach, Jewish Virtual Library, accessed June 14, 2014, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Politics/kach.html>.

261. Ibid.

262. Juergensmeyer, *Terror*, 54.

263. Taub, *The Settlers*, 110.

264. Ibid., 88.

265. Liebman, *Religious and Secular*, 148.

bridge between these two extremes, providing immense support for the settlement enterprise at both the governmental and local levels.

Gush Emunim was founded in 1974 to correct a perceived failure by the Labor government to establish full control of the occupied territories.²⁶⁶ The stunning victory in the 1967 Six-Day War left the Israeli population convinced of the virtues of their government. By 1973 however, the government had done very little to consolidate Israel's control over the newly acquired territories.²⁶⁷ Religious Zionists caught up in a messianic euphoria after 1967 were the most troubled by this. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 damaged the government's virtuous reputation. Talks of trading land for peace increased, and the National Religious Party failed to take a significant stand on retaining the Sinai Peninsula. As a result those religious Zionists who most strongly felt that Israel must retain all the occupied territories formed Gush Emunim. This movement's ideology was based in the teaching of Rabbi Zvi Kook, who espoused that God had returned the Promised Land to Israel; Kook claimed that not biblically permissible to relinquish any of the land that God had providentially restored to Israel in the Six-Day War.²⁶⁸

Cohen and Susser describe Gush Emunim as religious Zionism's undisputed champion of the settlement enterprise.²⁶⁹ Ravitzky holds that the ideas of religious Zionism as espoused by Zvi Kook translate directly into the doctrines and actions of Gush Emunim.²⁷⁰ These ideas include Israel's God-given ownership of their ancient homeland, and the primacy of the *mitzvah dalet*.²⁷¹ Settlement now became an act of redemption and a biblical mandate. For Gush Emunim, after Israel's providential victories in 1948 and 1967, the Palestinians of the occupied territories no longer belong in the land, and are therefore not a nation and have no political rights.²⁷² Due to the

266. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 147.

267. *Ibid.*, 149.

268. Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1997), 151.

269. Cohen and Susser, *Israel and the Politics*, 57.

270. Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 80.

271. Shimoni, *Zionist Ideology*, 343; Taub, *The Settlers*, 45.

272. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 154.

reluctance of the Israeli government to act in accordance with this biblical mandate to retain and settle the land, Gush Emunim began to teach that in a conflict between Zionism and government, the biblical mandates must be followed and should not be considered illegal by a legitimate Jewish government.²⁷³ To add validity to this idea, Gush Emunim referred back to the well-known and much respected Rabbi Abraham Kook, who said “there are times when laws of the Torah must be overridden.”²⁷⁴ Abraham Kook used this to excuse cooperation with political Zionism; now Gush used it to justify opposing the government Zionism had created. The establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, with or without the government’s permission, was the primary goal for Gush Emunim.²⁷⁵ Although Gush condoned sometimes illegal settlement activity, violent actions were never intended.²⁷⁶ However, their feelings of entitlement to heavily populated areas such as Hebron led to conflict with the Palestinians, acceptance of vigilantism, and a desensitizing toward violence.²⁷⁷

Gush Emunim was, for a short period of time, associated with the National Religious Party. They quickly dropped the constraints of parliamentary legitimacy in order to fulfill the higher calling to promote settlement, illegally if necessary. Gush filled a gap between the government and the settlers, providing support on the ground level, pressure at the higher levels, and employing a variety of tactics which included legal and illegal activities. Gush routinely protested what it felt were government violations of the biblical Jewish right to the occupied territories. Gush dominated the extraparliamentary space for nearly two decades, holding demonstrations where participants are estimated to reach over ten thousand.²⁷⁸ In regard to forcing settlements on the government, Gush had a well-developed strategy in which it would begin to build a deceptively large settlement

273. Ibid., 155.

274. Abraham Kook quoted in Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 105.

275. Ben-Porat, Levy, Mizrahi, Naor, and Tzfadia, *Israel Since 1980*, 153.

276. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 146.

277. Ibid., 170.

278. Ibid., 177.

without government permission, negotiate consent for a much reduced or temporary presence, and then slowly grow it into a well-established settlement.²⁷⁹

Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who founded the Hebron settlement in 1968, was the operational leader of the movement from the beginning, and became the symbolic leader after the death of Rabbi Zvi Kook.²⁸⁰ Robert Friedman, author of *Zealots for Zion* and an authority on the settlement movement, praised Levinger as the single greatest proponent of religious Zionism's settlement initiative, voted in one poll to be the most influential man in Israel in the 1980s.²⁸¹ However, Levinger was also known to be antagonistic, even combative, and sometimes referred to as a "religious fascist."²⁸² Though influential, he added to the violent subplot.

The 1978 Camp David Accords, signed by Begin, created a crisis in Gush Emunim and led directly to the formation of the Jewish Underground.²⁸³ When the Jewish Underground was revealed in 1984, the connections to Gush Emunim were clear; it was composed of a small minority of Gush members who had taken violence to an extreme which was unthinkable to the mainstream movement. Sprinzak argues that the mainstream Gush movement showed a disinclination toward violence.²⁸⁴ It may be argued that the Jewish Underground was a separate movement, but most scholars do not hold this opinion, some even calling this group the Gush Emunim Underground.²⁸⁵ Whatever the case, the Underground was found responsible for the 1980 attacks on five Arab mayors, the 1983 attack on the Islamic College in Hebron, as well as plots to bomb the Dome of the Rock and five Arab commuter buses.²⁸⁶ The discovery of the

279. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 149–51.

280. Ibid., 150.

281. Friedman, *Zealots*, 3–4.

282. Ibid., 4.

283. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 156.

284. Ibid., 146, 179.

285. Lustick, *For the Land*, 69.

286. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 146

Underground was a second major crisis for Gush Emunim, nevertheless Gush Emunim was unapologetic.²⁸⁷

Gush Emunim suffered a third blow to its reputation with the rise of the Kach movement, whose violent actions and extremist ideas reflected poorly on religious Zionist activism and the settlement enterprise. Although popular enough to elect Meir Kahane to the Knesset in 1984, the Kach Party was banned from the Knesset in 1988 for racist and anti-democratic proclamations, and declared illegal in 1994.²⁸⁸ The negative stigma of the Kach movement reflected to some extent on Gush Emunim and religious Zionism as a whole. An escalation in violence and extremist rhetoric culminated in the massacre at the Tomb of the Patriarchs and Rabin's assassination. These events silenced the religious Zionists, leading to the aforementioned theological silence, as Ravitzky states.²⁸⁹

Sprinzak argues that Gush Emunim, at the height of its power in the late '70s and early '80s, was "the nation's most influential social movement, with an unprecedented impact on government policies and public discourse."²⁹⁰ As mentioned, Gush functioned as a pressure group as well as a social movement, coordinating various sorts of protests and demonstrations. According to data supplied by Israel's Peace Now movement, out of the 110 authorized settlements established between 1974 and 1992 (the Gush Emunim era), 45 of them are considered ideologically religious, and an additional 10 are considered ideologically mixed.²⁹¹ All of these settlements may not be the result of Gush Emunim's direct efforts, but all must claim at least indirect aid from the efforts and influence of Gush. The well-known events at Sebastia recounted in the beginning of this chapter were the results of the Elon Moreh group, a faction within Gush Emunim. The contest which first occurred at Sebastia was repeated to great effect by Gush with several

287. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 171.

288. Ibid., 207, 215, 245.

289. Taub, *Settlers*, 100.

290. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 174.

291. Settlements and Outposts, Peace Now, accessed June 14, 2014, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/settlements-and-outposts>. Spreadsheet appears under the link "DOWNLOAD Settlements and Outposts Numbers and Data."

other settlements.²⁹² As a bridge connecting the ministries and parties at the highest levels of government with the settlers' work in the trenches, Gush Emunim greatly increase religious Zionist support at both levels and furthered the settlement process.

In conclusion, the influence of religious Zionism has been evaluated in three major areas: (1) the ability of settler groups to establish settlements in opposition to the government, (2) the influence of religiously affiliated parties and ministers in the settlement process, working both within and around government constraints, and (3) the role of social movements such as Gush Emunim in bridging the gap in the public arena. In each of these areas, the evidence indicated that religious Zionism does exert influence on Israel's settlement policies and processes. That influence is not irresistible, however, as demonstrated by the Camp David and Oslo Accords and the withdrawals from the Sinai and Gaza. The government, when unconstrained and motivated, has shown its willingness to act in opposition to the religious Zionist community. On the other hand, the religious Zionist community has shown remarkable ability to provide motivation and exploit constraints. Azoulay and Ophir emphasize the idea that these religious settlers had become expert at manipulating the authorities, bending or breaking the rules, and employing a variety of tactics to accomplish their goals—maximizing the influence of their minority movement.²⁹³

292. Sprinzak, *Brother*, 150.

293. Azoulay and Ophir, *One-State Condition*, 49.

V. CONCLUSION

Religious Zionism is a movement that has sought to advance the Jewish return to what religious Zionists claim as the entirety of their biblical and ancestral home. Their claim to the land reaches back to Abraham, and God's promise to give the land to Abraham and his descendants. From the time of that promise until the final diaspora in 135 CE (estimated at 2000 years), the Jews lived through various cycles of exile and return, with their possession of the Promised Land a central feature of their culture. From 135 CE until the State of Israel was founded in 1948, the Jewish culture remained distinct despite living in an exilic state. Zionism, founded by Theodore Herzl in the late nineteenth century, was in part a reaction to a perceived growth in anti-Semitism, and sought to give the Jewish people self-determination with a state of their own. Political Zionism, a secular phenomenon, spawned two responses from the religious community: anti-Zionism and religious Zionism. Anti-Zionism was the Jewish religious community's reaction to Zionism, and had taught for hundreds of years that it was forbidden to force a return to the Jewish homeland, that it was God's place to restore the Jews to the Promised Land. Religious Zionism was the opposing response from within the religious community which sought a way to cooperate with secular Zionism and return to the land. The birth of the State of Israel in 1948 was the fulfillment of the secular Zionist vision, but national security remained elusive. Religious Zionists, restored to a portion of the biblical inheritance, looked longingly toward Jerusalem and the remainder of the land. After Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, remarkable from the perspective of the Israeli community, the secular Zionist government and the religious Zionist community began the project of settling the occupied territories, one to increase security and the other to secure the biblical promise as they understand it.

In chapter 3, I examined the Israeli government's settlement policies and procedures. Israel began early in the occupation to avoid official policies and statements regarding retention and settlement of the land, becoming instead characterized by indecision, ambiguity, and stalling at the government level. The political space between parties has become more pronounced in recent years, swinging from talks of annexation

to unilateral withdrawal. Yet consistently, under every administration settlements have continued to increase.

I discuss in chapter 4 the religious Zionism's methods of influencing the government's settlement policies and practices. I discovered three general areas of religious Zionism activity. On the ground level, small groups of religious Zionists have established settlements without the consent of, or in opposition to the government. In the government, religious Zionists fill some influential political parties and ministry positions with a declared pro-settlement persuasion. In between the government and the ground level, religious Zionists created social movements like Gush Emunim to increase physical and social support for the settlement enterprise, and to increase popular pressure on the government. The violent subculture, or radical flank,²⁹⁴ also impacted the settlement process and method.

I have found that religious Zionism directly affected government policy by creating facts on the ground, establishing a decisive presence in the Knesset and influential ministries, and mobilizing a mass movement which cut across the social spectrum in support of the settlement enterprise. This combined action approach proved in many cases, though not all, capable of overcoming government policy or practice, outflanking national security concerns.

Religious Zionism directly challenged the government's settlement policy through the establishment of settlements in areas prohibited by the government. Hebron and Kaddum are examples of settlements forces on to a divided and constrained government. These settlers were able to apply a variety of frames through which their justification for settling appeared stronger than the government's restriction. For one frame, the settlers justified their actions as a religious obligation to fulfill a biblical mandate. They also chose sites which were culturally important to Israel, or called to memory important historic events. For example, the Etzion Bloc of settlements was wiped out during the 1948 War of Independence, and Hebron has the Tomb of the Patriarchs. In another frame, the settlers claimed that God had miraculously intervened in the Six-Day War to return

294. Remy Cross and David A. Snow, "Radicalism within the Context of Social Movements: Processes and Types." *Journal of Strategic Security* 4, no. 4 (2011), 117.

the land to the Jewish people. If God fought for Israel, then the government's frame of security concerns lost relevance. The settlers were also able use nostalgic images of the not-to-distant pre-independence settlement activities in which many of Israel's leaders had defied the British authorities. Many government officials were sympathetic to the settlement cause. The government could not find sufficient justification to maintain their prohibition on certain settlements and was forced to compromise.

Within the Knesset, religious Zionism was took maximum advantage of the parliamentary design, which awarded a disproportional amount of influence to smaller parties. Even the largest party in Israel is often forces to build coalitions with smaller parties in order to strengthen and stabilize the administration. These coalitions are built when the larger parties grant policy concessions to the smaller parties and appoint its members to influential ministries. In these positions, ministers where shown to act on their individual or party convictions, through back channels, and not in accordance with government design. This was shown to have been in practice during the Eshkol administration just after the Six-Day War, and was a major concern in Talya Sason's 2005 report on illegal outposts. The disproportionate power of small parties was best demonstrated when the religious Zionist party Tehiya collapsed the government coalition in 1992 over differences regarding the occupied territories.

Religious Zionism was able to create with Gush Emunim a movement which drew upon a wider population base than would have otherwise supported the settlement process. Gush Emunim mobilized thousands of people to visit the settlements, using holidays to create a festive or somber religious significance to the undertaking. Gush appealed to those outside their movement by encouraging Jews to visit culturally significant sites, and by attracting well-known politicians, rabbis, writers, and singers. The series of settlement attempts at Sebastia in 1974 and 1975, culminated in a week-long celebration attended by people from across Israeli society, and forced a concession from the government.

Gush Emunim also produced from its ranks violent actors, who arguably constituted a radical flank. This violent subculture was not accepted by the mainstream movement; although they shared the same goals, the acceptable means and methods

differed. Radical flanks have political effects: social movement studies have found that in some cases, a violent faction of a movement will, by contrast, increase the influence of the non-violent wing of that same movement.²⁹⁵ In this case, the violence and terror committed by the Jewish Underground and the Kach movement served to portray the illicit settlements by Gush as harmless, or even legitimate actions of religious devotion.

My conclusion is that religious Zionism has significantly influenced Israel's settlement policies and practices in the occupied territories. Determining the extent of that influence would require an exhaustive study, which could not easily cover the 47 years of occupation. The data from one study suggested that as much as fifty percent of the settlements founded from 1974 to 1992, the years of Gush Emunim's prominence, are ideologically religious or ideologically mixed (religious and secular).²⁹⁶

While it seems that religious Zionism is less influential than it has been in the past, that downward trend is not irreversible. Another subject I was repeatedly confronted with remains unresolved. The Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, sit on the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism. The presence of the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque prevents religious Zionists from building the Third Temple. Jewish control of these Islamic holy sites is worrisome and offensive to many Muslims. This is a potentially explosive situation which may bring religious Zionism back to the forefront of Israeli occupation policies and practices. In this way, religious Zionism may prove influential not only in the Israeli government, but also in regional and international peace and stability.

295. Cross and Snow, "Radicalism," 117.

296. Settlements and Outposts, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/settlements-and-outposts>.

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